

October 2011

Collector's

Owner's

2011 Top Product

BETWEEN THE PIPES

PINNACLE

ULTIMATE COLLECTION

DECADES
1980S

PANINI

IN THE GAME

UPPER D.E.C.K

Enshrined.

And the Winner is !

Also Inside:
Product Reviews
Contest Entries

HEROES AND PROSPECTS

10-11
Certified

TOP HOCKEY PRODUCT



LIKE HOCKEY? LIKE CONTESTS?

CHECK OUT THE RACE FOR THE PRICE:

<http://www.sportscardforum.com/showthread.php?t=1482902>

AND

THE ULTIMATE RIVALRY:

<http://www.sportscardforum.com/showthread.php?t=1492404>



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New Beginnings
By Karine Hains aka Pheeb888

On the hockey side of things, the last hobby season is now in the books with both Panini and Upper Deck having released their big hitters: Dominion on one hand and the Cup on the other. With those being release, our own Richard McAdam decided to see what you collectors thought were the ups and downs of the latest hobby season. I invite you to browse through the next few pages and find out if you agree with his comments and with the awards which were handed out.

The end of the hobby season also marks the beginning of the real hockey season as preseason is wrapping up and the players look to get on with serious business. The new season is just days away and every hockey fan is entitled to hope for the best for their team...for now anyhow, every team is equal...it won't remain that way for long but everyone can dream.

Speaking of dreaming, how would you like to win a dream prize? This year, the hockey team is bringing you not just one but two amazing contests. One in which you can win a limited edition autographed Carey Price jersey (thanks to StarSide Signatures) and the other one in which you can win tickets to the last game of the season at the Bell Centre in Montreal to not only see the Habs take on the Leafs but also to meet some of the players and get yourself some sweet autographed goodies! This once in a lifetime opportunity is brought to you in collaboration with Legends Depot which we are proud to call our partners! If you have any questions about these contests, feel free to contact any member of the hockey team or either myself or Richard McAdam aka RGM81. I should also add that Panini is sponsoring the different legs of the Race for the Price with a box of product for each contest and our friends at Upper Deck have agreed to sponsor a few legs of the Ultimate Rivalry. SCF would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our partners who make it possible for us to offer those prizes and opportunities to our membership.

With so many contests in the pipeline, we can always use ideas for new ones and if you do have some ideas of contests that you think would be fun, make sure to drop us a line! But in the meantime, kick back, relax and enjoy the ride of a brand spanking new NHL season!





Looking Back on the 2010-11 NHL Hobby Season By Richard McAdam aka RGM81

Over the course of several weeks, SCF members were asked to reflect on the hockey products from the 2010-11 season and give their feedback. What worked? What really jumped out at them? What could be done better? A number of questions were asked and as always, the SCF community gave its honest and thoughtful feedback regarding the products of all three hockey card makers. With the opening of the 2011-12 NHL regular season just days away, and the new card season already underway, let's take a look back at what SCF members thought of the year that was.

Still the King of the Mountain



The first question that was asked was very straight-forward: "Which company did the best job with their 2010-11 hockey products?" The answer, by a rather significant majority, was Upper Deck. Even though they had been through some tough times in the previous year, and faced not only a worthy contender in In The Game but also a strong new challenge from Panini, SCF members felt that Upper Deck rose to the occasion and retained their position at the forefront of the hobby. Among the many great responses asking what it is that Upper Deck does best, IrbeFan4Life summed it up by saying, "Consistency...their presence in the hobby is consistent...[and] their staple products always remain strong." They are a known quantity in the hockey card market, and those staple products such as SP Authentic and Upper

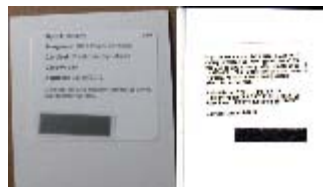
Deck 1/2 always rate highly among collectors in discussions of the best products. Our hat goes off to Upper Deck for staving off the competition and remaining the king of the mountain.

In response to that same question, In The Game finished in second place for their 2010-11 lineup. In addition to their standard-bearing sets Heroes and Prospects and Between The Pipes, ITG ventured back in time in 2010-11 to revisit the 1980s with their Decades release. The set was phenomenally popular with ITG fans, easily winning the vote for Most Popular ITG product, as it incorporated the nostalgia many collectors have with that era along with what ITG does best: making fantastic memorabilia cards. The vast treasure trove of jerseys in Dr. Price's inventory is what gives credence to the statement made by SCF member blacksheep, who wrote, "ITG is phenomenal at giving collectors real game-worn pieces of memorabilia...It really does make a difference knowing that the piece of jersey on the card was used and worn in an actual game rather than at an 'event'." The set is fantastic, and the input that ITG allows collectors to add to their products helps fans feel as though they have contributed to the product.



Even though they came in third place in the poll question, Panini did many things right in their freshman year making hockey cards. They burst out of the gate with Certified, which ranked very highly in the question about people's favourite Panini product of the year. The collectible parallels and unique memorabilia cards (alternate jerseys were procured for many Pittsburgh Penguins cards, and Centennial jerseys for some Montreal Canadiens players) made chasing the variant cards in the set a real thrill. Panini also earns the award for Best Rookie Card for the Crown Royale Rookie Silhouettes, which featured hard-signed autographs, large Prime memorabilia pieces, and a fantastic design. As SCF member Tmacfreak91 writes, "They definitely try to innovate. From players who sign for them, to many different types of game used combinations, to the early season hard signed autos, and lastly to the silhouettes which are by FAR the coolest new idea on the market they take a very different approach compared to UD which I appreciate." Variety is the spice of life, and Panini definitely brought new variety to the hobby with its products this year. They experienced a learning curve adapting to the hockey market, and hopefully it will result in even better products next season.

Room for Improvement Across the Board



One area that was consistently noted as needing improvement—particularly in the cases of Upper Deck and Panini—was handling redemption cards. Those little white cards have long been the bane of a collector's experience, and there was a lot of feedback on the issue. While collectors are generally understanding that some players can take their time returning their cards and/or sticker auto sheets, the overall volume of redemption

cards in 2010-11 products was significant enough that it remained front and centre of people's attention. People are still waiting for the rookie redemption cards from Certified to be built. Due to his concussion problems, Sidney Crosby autographs were redemption cards in many products in the latter half of the season. P.K. Subban was a redemption in nearly every product. With customers paying top dollar for higher-end products, they want cards, especially those of the major players, to be live, as best summed up by MasonRaymond0320, who wrote, "[I] don't like the idea of hitting a redemption after paying more than a \$100 per box."

One item that came up fairly regularly as a response to the question "Name one thing about Panini products that they must improve" was the level of parallels that Panini choose to utilize in their products. While they are certainly not the only company that uses different tiers for certain cards, some collectors felt that the new guys relied too heavily on parallels instead of using unique hits to drive products. A response from blacksheep expresses some collectors' frustrations with all the parallels: "nini needs to cut back on their parallel cards. They make it difficult for player collectors to get the cards they want." Certified brings forward one good example of this; while the product itself was very popular with some collectors, who enjoyed chasing down different variations of the cards, a popular



player could have more than 20 cards #'d /10 or fewer. Parallels have existed for years and are made by all companies, but there needs to be a semblance of balance that can still generate value in a card #'d / 25 while differentiating it from one #'d /75. Hopefully Panini can take that lesson to heart.

Collectors love autographed cards, especially those that are hard-signed. This is one area that many feel that In The Game can improve its products. While every product they release features autograph content, only a very small number have on-card signatures. The Superlative line is greatly received in large part due to its hard-signed content from many stars—past, future, and present. So it is therefore not altogether surprising that many collectors would like to see Ultimate Memorabilia, another high-end ITG release, doing away with the stickers and delivering on-card autographs in its future offerings. Marekschwarz33 recognizes that this may not be so simple, stating, “I know this would be tough since they don’t do redemptions, but I think sticker autos really detract from Ultimate.” There may have to be a trade-off between content and going hard-signed for this excellent product, but it may be worth the extra effort.

Building on Existing Strengths

While collectors are happy to point out areas where the card companies need to improve in the hopes of provoking change, they are also very willing to give credit where it is due on the things that are done right. Obviously the big three are doing a lot of things right if the hobby is continuing to grow and attract new collectors while also retaining those who have been around for many years. Below are some of the highlights that all three companies provide, as noted by SCF’s members.



When discussing In The Game, the first thing that came to the mind of many collectors was their amazing vault of memorabilia. We asked collectors, “Name the thing about In The Game products that you think they do best,” and at least 80% of respondents mentioned memorabilia in some capacity. The example to the left is from a Between the Pipes Golden Goalies Jersey #'d /10 – a truly eye-popping piece. ITG has developed a tremendous reputation for providing game-used jersey cards in their products, delivering authentic jerseys, pads, gloves, and more of some of the game’s all-time great players and up-and-

coming prospects alike. Collectors take great confidence in Dr. Price and his products that not only deliver items that were only used in actual games, but often taking the extra step to specify where the jerseys were used (i.e. Canada/Russia ADT Challenge Games) on the backs of the cards. The other area of ITG’s great strength that many collectors identified was the company’s rather stringent no redemptions policy. When a person breaks a box of Enshrined or Heroes & Prospects, they know that every autograph card is live. Decades was a product that several people mentioned for its ability to go out and procure hard-signed signatures of many players that don’t normally sign cards, including the entire



1980 US Olympic Team. The company went above and beyond to ensure that every player was included and had their cards returned in a timely manner. Hopefully ITG will be able to continue to be redemption-free for years to come, and hopefully their strength in this area will be mimicked by UD and Panini.



For Panini's first year on the market, they established themselves strongly thanks to their innovation and their designs. Being that many hockey collectors do not dabble into other sports products, 2010-11 was an introduction for many collectors to what Panini offers. The designs and concepts of many sets were thus a revelation to hobbyists that have only known Upper Deck for the past five years. Al Muir, Panini's NHL Brand Manager, has been a collector himself for decades, and brings a wealth of experience to the company and its offerings. His rather catchy subset titles like "Crease Is The Word" and "Shirt Off My Back" had more pizzazz to them than the often-generic titles of other subsets. Additionally, Panini's re-introduction of the Nufex technology in sets such as Pinnacle built upon the brand reputation of the company's 1990's era products. Concepts such as the Rookie Silhouettes and Scratching The Surface autographs in Crown Royale looked

amazing and were among the more popular products of the season. They have definitely injected a breath of fresh air into the market.

Upper Deck is most well-known force in the hobby for the past 20 years. The very name is a symbol of the hobby and the brand recognition alone ensures that they will remain a major player even in a more crowded market. BillInDallas writes, "Upper Deck brings the quality and stability that we have come to expect with their products." While there is not much variation in products over the past few years, those that remain are known quantities and consistently deliver the results and quality you would expect. Young Guns, SP Authentic, and the other staples of the Upper Deck line are cards that people will purchase for as long as the company produces hockey cards and will remain near the top of any collector's wish list. It is for that reason that SCF's members gave Upper Deck the nod as the best manufacturer for the 2010-11 season.

Looking Ahead, What Do You Want?

The 2010-11 season brought forward some interesting products, some of which were big hits, and some of which made us long for those products that were not utilized this season. We asked members which products they would like to see dropped for 2011-12 and which products they would like to see incorporated into the line-up for the new season. SCF collectors have spoken....



Among Upper Deck products, three products garnered the most votes from collectors who were asked which product they would like to see dropped from the current roster. Members were allowed to select multiple products if they so desired, and this resulted in three products being very close to another. Those sets were Black Diamond, SP Game Used, and SPx. These three mid-range sets have not changed very much in recent years, and that may contribute to collectors' overall lack of enthusiasm for the products. In their place, collectors would like to see Ice revived as a stand-alone product and they also voted often for the return of OPC Premier. No doubt the hard-to-pull #1/99 acetate RC's in Ice and the hard-signed jersey cards of OPC Premier were among the primary reasons that collectors want these products back. Upper Deck has already confirmed that Black Diamond will return in 2011-12, so unfortunately that one wish will not be fulfilled right away.

Though Panini did introduce a high-end product in Dominion in 2010-11, collectors still want more. A large percentage voted to see National Treasures brought over to the hockey line-up for the coming season. Coming second on that list was Elite, which was utilized to a small degree in Zenith's Dare To Tear program. As for which products should face the axe, collectors spoke very clearly in saying that Luxury Suite and Donruss should be dropped for the 2011-12 roster. The numerous memorabilia parallels in Luxury Suite were not overly popular with collectors, and the rather bland rookie cards in Donruss left it in no position to compete with Upper Deck's staple series in the \$4-per-pack price range.

Final Thoughts on the Year That Was

The 2010-11 season was a great year for many collectors. The arrival of Panini on the hockey card scene made every company step up their game a notch, and when that happens, collectors are the big winners. Though we may have our squabbles about a particular series or the ongoing issues of redemption cards, there are many more reasons to be positive about the state of the hobby than there are to focus on the negatives. The season delivered a strong rookie crop that is likely to hold value. The rise of several young stars will help fuel demand for more cards. The need for the companies to out-do one another will result in better cards being made to deliver the most bang for your hobby bucks. Most importantly, companies are listening and interacting more with collectors to ensure that they are in touch with the pulse of the hobby. All of this has made for a truly memorable season.

And Now, The Awards!

SCF members were given a wide range of categories to vote upon for their best and worst of 2010-11. Here are the results!

Best Rookie Card: Panini Crown Royale Rookie Silhouettes

Best Memorabilia Card: Ultimate Collection Premium Patches

Best Autograph Card: Panini Crown Royale Scratching The Surface Signatures

Best Premium Memorabilia: NHL Shields



Best Non-Autograph Non-Memorabilia Insert: SPx Shadowbox Stoppers
Best Parallel Set: Upper Deck Spectrum Exclusives
Best 1/1 Memorabilia Card: ITG Ultimate Memorabilia Ultimate Emblems
Best Overall Product: Upper Deck Ultimate Collection
Best In The Game Product: Decades: The 1980s
Best Panini Product: Crown Royale
Best Upper Deck Product: Ultimate Collection

Worst Overall Product: Panini Luxury Suite
Worst ITG Product: Enshrined
Worst Panini Product: Luxury Suite
Worst Upper Deck Product: Victory
Worst Rookie Card: Donruss

The SCF staff would like to thank everybody who participated in the 2010-11 Year End Awards survey. As always, your feedback is greatly appreciated.





At the time of going to press, these release dates were accurate but as you know, release dates do change...

October 2011 Releases

HOCKEY

10/06 - ITG Canada vs. The World
10/04 - UD O-Pee-Chee
10/20 - UD Parkhurst Champions

FOOTBALL

10/12 - Topps Gridiron Legends
10/12 - Panini Crown Royale
10/19 - Panini Absolute Memorabilia
10/26 - Panini Totally Certified
10/26 - Topps Chrome
10/19 - SP Authentic

RACING

10/26 - Press Pass Legends

BASEBALL

10/19 - Bowman Chrome
10/19 - Leaf Metal Draft
10/12- Topps Finest



CANADA vs THE WORLD

We stand on guard for thee!



Product Review: ITG Canadiana
By Tony Joyce aka Enigma

First and foremost, I'd like to thank our sponsors at In The Game for providing us with this box.

Product Detail

8 cards per pack

1 pack per box

Current Retail Price (online): \$84.99 - \$99.99



What we Pulled

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fALxbBRcXFQ>

Base (Red Version /275) (5): Air Marshall Billy Bishop, Bat Masterson, Jeff Healey, Kevin Zegers, Terry Sawchuk, Base (Blue Version /80) (1): Angela James





Terry Puhl Autograph



Double Memorabilia Silver Version
Corey Haim 2-color Shirt/Tyler Labine 2-color Shirt /90



Mega Memorabilia Silver Limited Version Ferguson Jenkins Jersey w/ two pinstripes /90





Final Ratings

Base - 4/5

Design - 4/5

Fun - 5/5

Value - 3.5/5

Rebuy - 4/5

Total - 20.5/25

There have been lots of famous faces for Canadians to celebrate over the years, and this release from In The Game does a great job profiling a wide variety of them in the 100 card base set. Our six base cards featured two Hockey Hall of Famers in Terry Sawchuk and Angela James, actor Kevin Zegers (best known for being the child star in the 'Air Bud' series of movies), musician Jeff Healey (who's ability to play the guitar, despite being blind, made him world famous), Wild West Sheriff (and Wyatt Earp cohort) Bat Masterson, and World War One flying Ace Billy Bishop (Bishop shot down more enemy planes than any other allied pilot in WWI, claiming a total of 72).

The autograph in our box was of Terry Puhl. A native of Saskatchewan, Puhl starred for 14 seasons with the Houston Astros, and one final one with the Kansas City Royals. The former big-league Left Fielder is a member of the Saskatchewan Sports Hall of Fame, the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame, and the Texas Baseball Hall of Fame. He's currently the Manager of the University of Houston-Victoria baseball team, and the manager of the Canadian National baseball team.

We pulled a dual memorabilia card of Canadian Actors Corey Haim, and Tyler Labine. Haim was best known for his role (alongside Corey Feldman) in Lost Boys, while Labine is famous for his roles on Television shows like "Reaper", "Invasion", and "Breaker High" alongside Ryan Gosling.

The second memorabilia piece we pulled was a spectacular piece of a Game Used Ferguson Jenkins jersey. Not just a baseball Hall of Famer, Jenkins remains the only Canadian to ever win a Cy Young Award.

The entire release has a very nice vibe to it. The Maple Leaf is featured somewhere on every card, and you really get a sense of something very Canadian while opening it. The base set is wide ranging, and very inclusive of many different sports stars, entertainment stars, and historical figures. ITG's usual use of great memorabilia is no different in this product than the many others they've released over the years. Once more ITG has also shown that sticker autographs don't have to be a bad thing.

Once again, I'd like to thank our wonderful sponsors at In The Game for giving us the opportunity to open and review this release. For more information on all their products, visit them today at www.itgtradingcards.com.



Product Review: 2011 Topps Football
By Tony Joyce aka Enigma

First and foremost, I'd like to thank our sponsors at Topps for providing us with this box.

Product Detail

36 packs per box

10 cards per pack

Current Retail Price (online): \$44.99 - \$54.99

Product Description

TOPPS FOOTBALL looks eagerly towards the upcoming NFL season with an all-new 2011 edition featuring star veterans, highly-touted rookies, on-card autographs, and one-of-a-kind relic cards.

1 Autographed OR Relic Card per Hobby Box!
 2 Autographed and 1 Relic Card per Jumbo Box!

What we Pulled

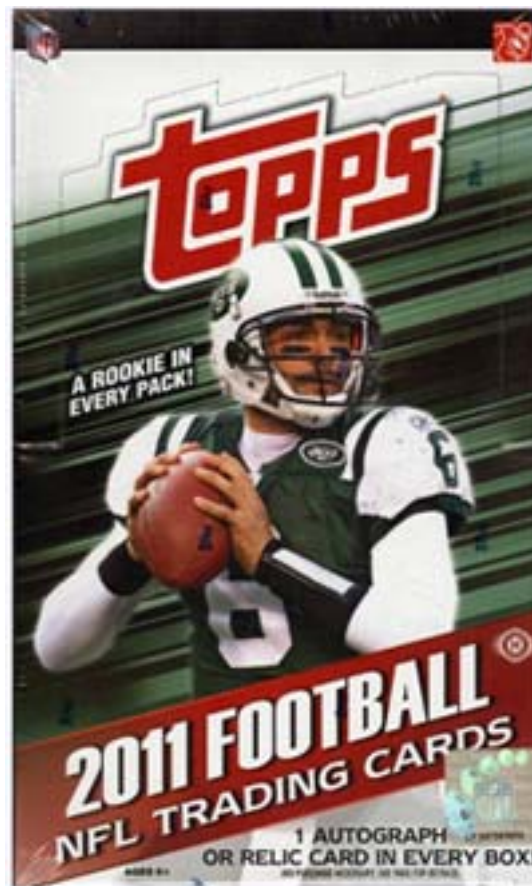
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hixDN-HzStQ>

Base: 303/440 (68.9%)

Dupes: 0

Gold /2011 (4): Brandon Jackson, Trent Cole, Cedric Benson, Darnell Dockett

Black /55 (1): Chris Johnson





1950 Bowman Mini (12)
 1950 Bowman Mini 1st /50 (1): Santonio Holmes
 Faces Of The Franchise (9)
 Gameday (9)
 Super Bowl Legends (6)
 ToppsTown (6)
 Super Bowl Legends Giveaway (6) - Not Scanned



Gameday Dwayne Bowe Jersey with stitching



Final Ratings

Base - 4.5/5
 Design - 4/5
 Fun - 4/5
 Value - 3/5
 Rebuy - 3/5
 Total - 18.5/25 (74%)

The base release in football for Topps mimics the design of its baseball product, which is typical every year. With a 440-card set that includes numerous rookies, you get a large chunk of the base set in one box. There are two main parallels, Gold (/2011) and Black (/55).

There are a handful of inserts this year. The top attention getter has to be the 1950 Bowman Minis. These are designed to replicate the look of cards from 1950 Bowman and are smaller than a regular card. There are 144 subjects and a parallel version /50. Faces Of The Franchise depicts two players



with whom the team name and the players go hand in hand. In trying to bring the excitement of the Diamond Giveaway program from baseball to football, Topps has created the Topps Legends Giveaway promotion. Instead of getting a ring or prize and a card with each codes, you can either get a specially made die-cut card or other virtual items. The goal is to get all 45 rings, coins or jerseys. If you do, you will receive a specially autographed item from Joe Namath.

It's hard to find a lot of value monetarily with Topps Football, but it can be worthwhile for collectors. Each pack does yield at least 1 insert and 1 random pack will contain either a relic or autograph. Also, at least 1 rookie card is in every pack. This is a great product for set collectors or youngsters wanting to pick up a few cards at a decent price. The Topps Legends promotion is nice, but nowhere near as good as the baseball version. While there are those who will bust cases of the hobby and jumbo products, this release is usually a one and done purchase.

Once again, I'd like to thank our wonderful sponsors at Topps for giving us the opportunity to open and review this release. For more information on all their products, visit them today at www.topps.com.



TOPPS®



Product Review: 2011 Topps Lineage Baseball

By Tony Joyce aka Enigma

First and foremost, I'd like to thank our sponsors at Topps for providing us with this box.

Product Details

24 packs per box

8 cards per pack

Current Retail Price (online): \$74.99

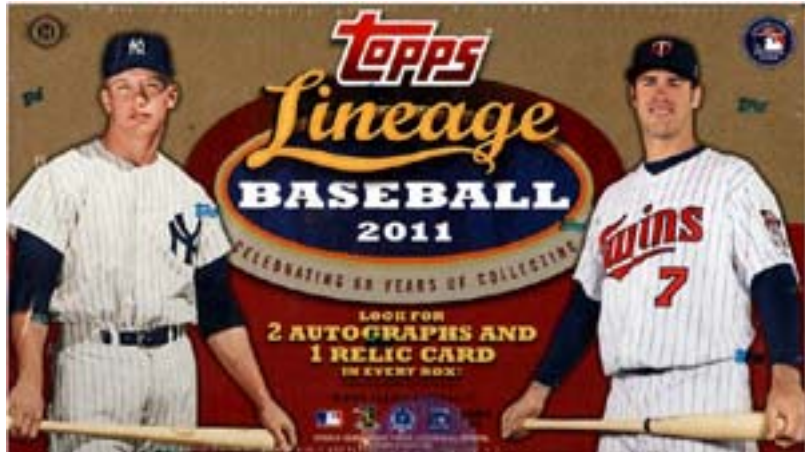
- \$84.99

Product Highlights

3 Hits In Every Hobby Box!

- Two Autographed Cards with at Least 1 On-Card Autograph

- One Relic Card

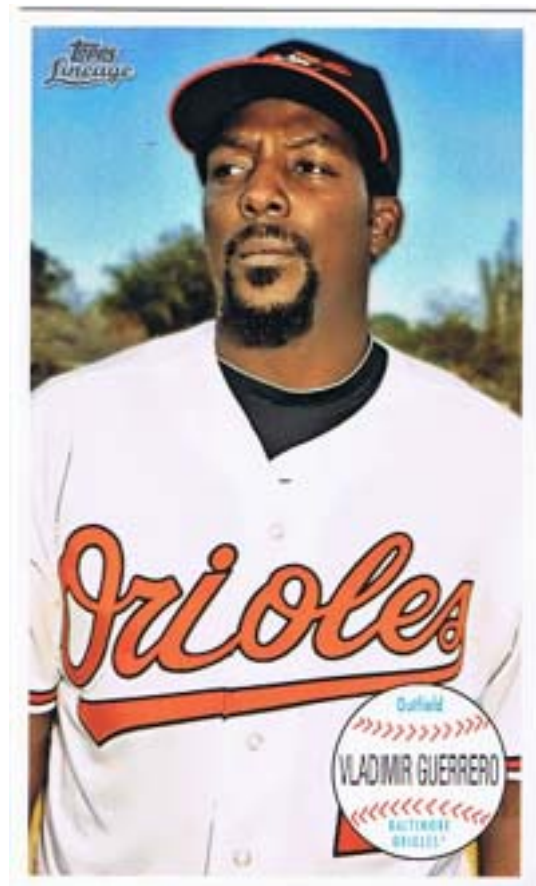


In the spirit of Topps 60th Anniversary, Topps honors its famous past eras with new Lineage Baseball. Distinguished with a 1952 on-card autograph list featuring the living greats of the game, a 1975 Mini Relic card set highlighted by 90 stellar players, and topped off with a retrospective of Topps most famed, quirky, and beloved insert cards of all-time, Lineage Baseball is poised to be a runaway best seller!

What we Pulled

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mf_IwAMisyY

Vladimir Guerrero Oversized Box Topper





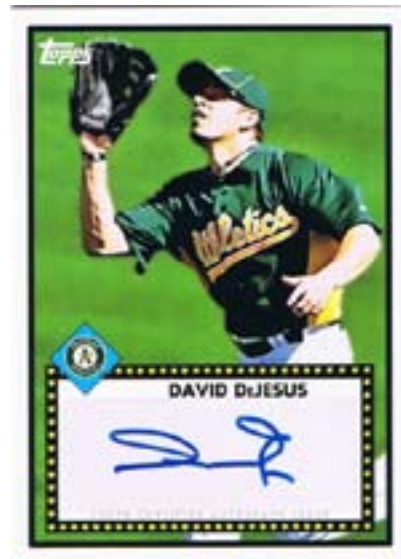
Dupes - 0
 Diamond Anniversary (6)
 Platinum Diamond (6)

1975 Minis (6)
 Topps Stand-Ups (2)
 Topps Rookies (4)
 Topps Venezuelan (2)
 Topps Cloth Stickers (2)
 Topps 3-D (2)



1975 Topps Mini Josh Johnson Jersey

1952 Topps David DeJesus Auto





1952 Topps Reprint Bob Del Greco Auto (on-card)

Final Ratings

Base - 4.5/5
 Design - 5/5
 Fun - 5/5
 Value - 3/5
 Rebuy - 4/5
 Total - 21.5/25 (86%)



Every year, it seems there's a new throwback product on market. LOOK at releases such as Allen & Ginter, Heritage and Gypsy Queen for starters. Each tries to mimic the look and idea of the original. But what if you had 60 years of designs and ideas and you could make one product to bring it all together? Well, you would have Topps Lineage.

Topps Lineage is a trip down memory lane all sealed up into 24 individual packs. The 200-card base set features a mix of today's stars, yesterday's heroes and the future of baseball. In addition, ten subjects are highlighted as members of the Topps All-Rookie Team, even denoted with the famous Topps Rookie Cup logo. Topps continues the Diamond Anniversary theme with a parallel version of the same name and the Platinum Diamond parallel.

Remember when inserts seemed special each time you got one and how they really appealed to you as a kid? Well, Topps has brought back a myriad of those for Lineage. From Topps Rookies (which takes you back to buying Rack Packs in the 1980s) to Topps Venezuelan (complete with the backs written in Spanish), you get it all. Seriously, who didn't enjoy being able to transform your card in a pop-up version with Topps Stand-Ups or the ability to move a card and have the player move as well with Topps 3-D.

Lineage will yield a relic and 2 autographs on average. While you can still find the 60th Anniversary relics and autographs, Topps streamlined the amount of various sets you will find. There is only one relic set, the 1975 Topps Minis and one autograph set, based of the 1952 Topps design. In an absolutely amazing fashion, Topps split up the 1952 auto set in today's players which uses stickers autos and living subjects that were originally featured in the 1952 set. Reprints were made of these cards and all contain on-card autos. Topps Lineage is a wonderful and whimsical trip through the past 60 years of Topps. Many of the sets featured have probably been forgotten about, yet the mere mention of them elicits fond memories. This is a great bridge between three or even possibly four generations of collectors. I for one can't wait for Topps to hit its 75th Anniversary just to see what other memorable moments will be made for collecting's next generation.

Once again, I'd like to thank our wonderful sponsors at Topps for giving us the opportunity to open and review this release. For more information on all their products, visit them today at www.topps.com.



Product Review: 10/11 Panini Totally Certified Basketball

By Tony Joyce aka Enigma

First and foremost, I'd like to thank our sponsors at Panini for providing us with this box.

Product Detail

6 packs per box
 5 cards per pack
 Current Retail Price (online): \$94.99 - \$109.99

Product Description

6 packs per box. 5 cards per pack.



Panini Totally Certified Basketball offers collectors five serial #'d Parallels to chase, including short-printed Totally Gold (#'d/25), Totally Green (#'d/5) and Totally Black(#d/1)

Box Break

- 30 Cards
- Including
- 6 Autographs or Memorabilia Cards (at least 2 Autographs #'d/599 or less)
- 2 Mirror Reds (#'d/499)
- 4 Other Inserts (#'d/499 or less)

What we Pulled

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8KSk8u2L7Fw>

- Base /1849 - 16/150 (10.7%)
- Totally Blue /299 (3) - Brandon Jennings, Linas Kleiza, Anthony Randolph
- Totally Red /499 (4) - Trevor Ariza, Ron Artest, Manu Ginobili, Darko Milicic
- Certified Potential /249 (1) - James Harden





Fabric Of The Game Jersey Number
Manu Ginobili Jersey /99



Fabric Of The Game Jersey Number
Prime Andres Nocioni 2-cl Patch /25



Fabric Of The Game Team Name
Kobe Bryant Jersey /299



Rookie Emerald Andy Rautins
3-cl Patch/Auto /5





Totally Gold Anthony Randolph Auto /10



Totally Red Rudy Fernandez Jersey /249



Final Ratings

Base - 4.5/5
 Design - 4.5/5
 Fun - 5/5
 Value - 4.5/5
 Rebuy - 4.5/5
 Total - 23/25 (92%)

By combining two solid products, Panini has unleashed Totally Certified upon the collecting world. Certified Materials has been a staple product of the company for years. They infused it with a wonderful product from Pinnacle in the 90s to create this mega-hit. There is a 150-card base set with each card veteran (150 total) numbered to 1849 and rookies (35 total) numbered to 599. There are parallel versions known as Totally Red, Totally Blue, etc. that match the color of the card and are numbered to 499 or less. In addition, there is only one insert set called Certified Potential. Cards are numbered to 249 and you will also find five parallel levels.

Each pack yields either a relic or autograph. A huge bonus is that the rookie autos are all hard signed, something collectors have been in favor of for years. Certified Materials fans will be pleased to see the Fabric Of The Game series. The relic windows are cut to show a player's jersey number or team name. In addition, rookies are given a separate card design with the word "rookie" cut out to house the relic swatch and a clean white field at the bottom of the card for the signature. Outside of that, you have "Totally" relics and autos that match the parallel color and are numbered accordingly.



And as if that's not enough, some boxes will contain a redemption for a Panini HRX card. This card features one of four players (Kobe Bryant, Kevin Durant, Blake Griffin or John Wall) on a video trading card. The player is highlighted in the video. There are only 50 of each player, with 10 being autographed. In addition, each has a gold 1/1 autographed version.

After being around for decades, card companies tend to run out of ideas on new products to develop and introduce to the market. This is why there has been a push over the last couple of years to bring back sets from yesteryear. Each one tends to have a gimmick attached to try to appeal to collectors. Panini goes down a different route with the union of two products that were solid on their own.

There is a lot of upside to Totally Certified. For one, every card is serial numbered. For a product that is price-pointed like it is, that says a lot. On top of that, you are guaranteed an autograph or relic in every pack. If that's not enough to get your attention, every rookie autograph is hard signed.

Every year, there is a small handful of products that appear on the market that creates a huge buzz and this is one of them. Collectors will enjoy many aspects of Totally Certified from price to enjoyment as well as yield, not to mention the chase to find one of the HRX cards. All in all, if you are looking for that one product to get in basketball, look no further.

Once again, I'd like to thank our wonderful sponsors at Panini for giving us the opportunity to open and review this release. For more information on all their products, visit them today at www.paniniamerica.net.





Product Review: 2011 Press Pass Fanfare Racing
By Tony Joyce aka Enigma

First and foremost, I'd like to thank our sponsors at Press Pass for providing us with this box.

Product Detail

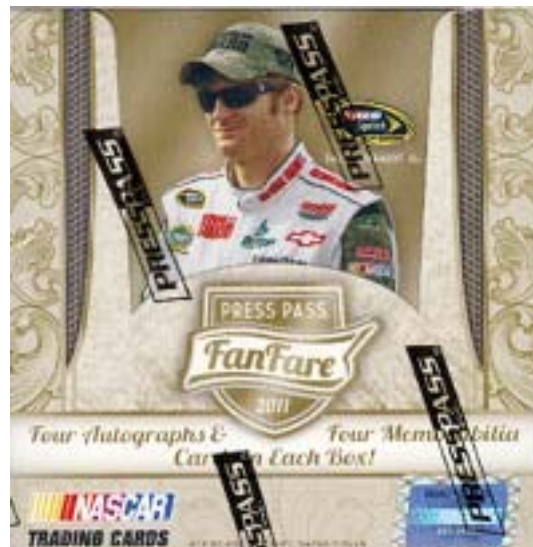
8 packs per box

5 cards per pack

Current Retail Price (online): \$114.99 - \$129.99

Product Description

Press Pass is excited to announce its newest addition to the NASCAR trading card lineup - Press Pass FanFare! This all new set delivers the best value of the year with an authentic on-card autograph or race-used memorabilia card in every pack!



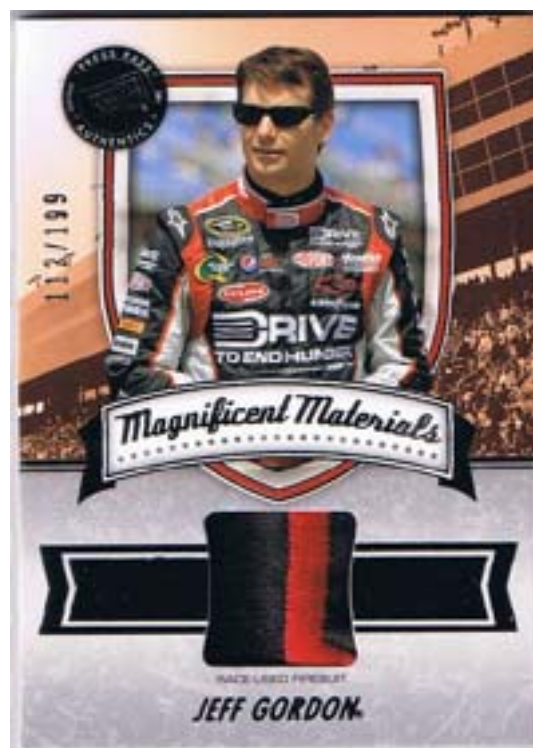
Product Highlights

- Autographs - Press Pass FanFare features the most expansive autograph lineup of all Press Pass 2011 releases with four levels to collect. Many Nationwide and Truck series drivers will have their first autograph cards exclusively in FanFare!

What we Pulled

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rvm6frTTluk>

Bonus Pack - Magnificent Materials Jeff Gordon 2-color Firesuit /199





Base - 17/100 (17%)
 Die-Cut - 8
 Championship Caliber (8)
 Rookie Standouts (2)



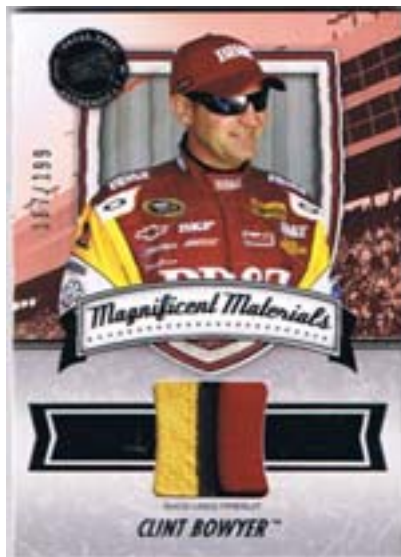
Ryan Truex Auto /200



Joey Coulter Auto /51



Magnificent Materials Clint Bowyer
 3-color Firesuit /199

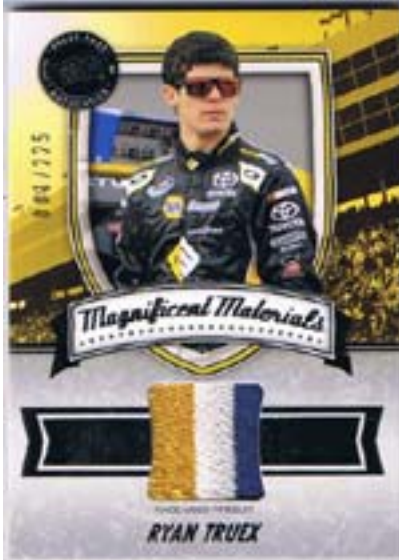


Magnificent Materials Jeff Burton
 2-color Firesuit/Glove /50





Magnificent Materials Ryan Truex
3-color Firesuit /225



Magnificent Materials Timmy Hill
Tire /199



Magnificent Materials Signature Edition
David Gilliland Glove/Auto /99



Magnificent Materials Signature Edition
Justin Lofton 2-color Glove/Auto /96



Final Ratings

Base - 4/5
 Design - 5/5
 Fun - 4.5/5
 Value - 4.5/5
 Rebuy - 4/5
 Total - 22/25 (88%)



The debacle that was Five Star having been scrapped from this year's lineup, Press Pass replaced it with a FanFare. Much like any new product, the anticipation level was high. Could a product with this much "fanfare" be successful considering there was a lot of focus around lower-tier drivers that do not really have anything card-wise. Simply put, yes!

The base set only contains 100 cards. The drivers are bordered on the left and right by gold bars with a swirl design. Each pack also contains one die-cut parallel with silver on the border instead of gold. For set enthusiasts, there are two inserts, Championship Caliber and Rookie Standouts.

The lure is that every pack contains either a relic, an autograph or possibly a combination of the two. In addition, Press Pass added a silver foil bonus pack which delivers an extra "hit". Some might scoff at the lineup of names that you might receive as your big card in each pack, but when you consider that some of these guys have either never had or barely had any cards like this, it allows racing collectors a chance to acquire items they never had a chance to get before. While this would not work out too well in other sports, it works out wonderfully in racing.

Press Pass FanFare succeeded in delivering the goods with a price point to match. It's hard to find a release in any sport that contains nine "hits" in this price range. I do feel that there should have been one extra base card in each pack to bring up the total to 25%, but that is a very minor detractiton from a well-thought out product. I can easily see collectors trying one box out and going back for more. Is this a product for the secondary market? Probably not. However, it is worthwhile for collectors.

Once again, I'd like to thank our wonderful sponsors at Press Pass for giving us the opportunity to open and review this release. For more information on all their products, visit them today at www.presspassinc.com.





Hey! Mister Announcer, You Weren't that Good Either!

By Stephen Duell aka Spuds1961

This article finds me a little cranky and incredulous at how these guys and gals who weren't good players can criticize the heck out of today's players.

One Merrill Hoge has taken on the task of downgrading everything Tim Tebow does on a football field. I don't know what the deal is or why he has taken such a disliking to Mr. Tebow, but here's a newsflash for you Merrill; Tebow is better than you ever were at this stage of his career as a player, and ten times better as a person, maybe that is what Merrill's problem is he can't measure up, so he chooses to put Tim down.



I get a kick out of the women softball announcers who break down everything a college player does wrong on a play as if they never screwed up anything in their whole career. I find it funny that ESPN and other stations choose to hire these athletes as commentators and sportscasters and let them have free reign to say whatever they want. What I would like to see happen to all these prima donnas who think they did no wrong on the field is show some highlights of their stellar careers, perhaps they wouldn't be so critical.

I also find it amusing that these same athletes who are hired as commentators will get the position a lot easier than a person who went to school to try and become a sportscaster. The field is not even partially fair, as if you didn't play for a professional franchise face it you'll be lucky to get a job announcing single a baseball or class d basketball. When I was younger I wanted to go to broadcasting school but my stepfather talked me out of it, and he showed me stats to back up what he was talking about, for every regular person who might get a broadcasting job there are 3 retired sports figures who will get a shot at it first.

What really bothers me though is that these athletes that do get the position act as if it is no big deal to spout their criticisms and hatred. I like my sportscasters to be knowledgeable and somewhat humble, I don't want or need somebody commentating who must've had a lifetime 1,000 batting average, or never threw an incomplete pass, or never missed a free throw, or never hit a ball into the net in a Wimbledon tennis match. What I'm trying to bring up with this article is; instead of being haters and criticizing all of today's athletes maybe a flashback to their own careers would serve as a nice wake up call. Okay got that off my chest, I feel a little better, thanks for the read, take care Steve

I just felt I needed to add some of Merrill Hoge's stats to embellish the fact that he wasn't all that and a bag of chips Career touchdowns 21 Career fumbles 22, hmmm "fumbleitis" anyone? Career yards per carry 3.8, so the next time I hear Merrill downgrade somebody else's career I'll just look at his stats and have a little chuckle to myself.

A Greatful Soldier By SGT Joshua Helms aka Helms83

I'm embarrassed to admit that I have been a diehard Cubs fan of unwaivered support and have yet to visit Wrigley Field; even though I have lived a short two hours west of Chicago for the past 15 years. Finally, while home on R&R from Afghanistan, my fiancée surprised me with tickets to my first Cubs game there.

We had tickets for the September 16th Astros v. Cubs contest. Our seats were along the third base line, six rows from the bullpen holding area, just to the left of the Cubs dugout. It was a chilly, overcast, autumn day; but I was as excited as a kid on Christmas day. I took pictures of everything visible and was in complete awe of the history surrounding Wrigley Field. The atmosphere was exciting; even though the Cubs post-season chances ended at the beginning of August. However, the real excitement was lying ahead with a couple surprises my fiancée had arranged.

At the end of the sixth inning, a 'Cubs Ambassador' comes to our seats with a VIP package full of Cubs memorabilia and thanked me for my service. I received a few hats, sweat bands, pictures of Wrigley and the starting picture for the Cubs. I thought it to be a pretty generous gift. Then shortly after the seventh inning stretch (sang by Martin Sheen), a Cubs bullpen coach pointed to me and motioned for me to come down!

I approach the 'sideline' of the Cubs bullpen, and the Coach identifies himself as Lester Strobe. He states he heard that I was home on leave from Afghanistan and attending my first Cubs game. I reply and he says, "From a grateful Cubs organization, (we) thank you for everything you and your family sacrifice for (us)." He then hands me a baseball, shakes my hand, and tells me to be safe with the rest of my deployment.

I return to my seat before I even look at the ball. There's a grass stain, indicating the ball was used during the game, and 12 signatures. The ball was signed by:

Lester Strobe (Bullpen Coach)
Mark Riggins (Bullpen Coach)
Kerry Wood
Sean Marshall
Jeff Samardzija
Andrew Lane
Edgar Tovar
Andrew Cashner
John Gaub
John Grabow
Ramon Ortiz
James Russell





Unbeknownst to me, when I went to the restroom, my fiancée went to the bullpen sideline and spoke to the bullpen coach. She told Lester Strobe the circumstances surrounding my first Cubs game, and asked if there would be anyway for a Cubs player to sign a ball and give it to me. Lester told her he couldn't make any promises, but he would see what he could do. Neither of us expected what Lester did for us.

So the game continues, and of course I'm riding 'cloud-9' for the remainder of it. The Cubs gave up the lead in the top of the ninth, but the game continued into extra innings, twelve to be exact, meaning free baseball. Ultimately, the Cubs pull out the win and you would have thought the Cubs had clinched a playoff berth with the excitement surrounding the ballpark. And then of course, we all sang

'Go Cubs, Go!' with the celebration of the win.

All-in-all, this is an unforgettable first Cubs game at Wrigley Field and the Cubs organization really went out of their way. But my fiancée made all of this possible and I'm lucky to have shared the experience with a woman like her.

By the way, she also bought me a couple of boxes of 2011 Topps Platinum, which resulted in a 1/1 in each box (which, since 2006, I have only pulled two 1/1 cards):
Terrance Toliver Yellow Printing Plate Auto
Steven Jackson Prime Patch Auto



To my Fiancee, thank you for everything: making leave memorable and supporting our family through this year long deployment. You are my 1/1 and I love you (no fellas, she isn't available and she won't pick your boxes for you)...

Happy Trading!



NFL Games Are in Session
By Matthew Lambe aka bradyfanatic12



Now that the NFL has started its season, SCF's Football Forums are back in the swing of things. You know with rookies and veterans getting a chance to play again it will cause a stir on the boards. Collectors are finding new players to collect and rekindling old collections of players who are performing. It's sad that some rookies will have to wait until next year to see regular season action like Ryan Williams and Mikel Leshoure, but with that being said it gives collectors a chance to go all-in with some of their nice

cards. Two things that always excite me about the start of the NFL season is the way the market changes by the week and fantasy football.

Rookies like Cam Newton, Patrick Peterson, A.J. Green and Randall Cobb had a great opening weekend with exciting plays and some productive statistics. Sales and trading requests have become more apparent for these players early on. The question always remains though if they can continue their early success for the 16 week season. While there was and is many doubters about Cam Newton's transition into the NFL, he proved that given time and an opportunity he can throw the ball around the field with great success. Patrick Peterson showed that he's not only going to be a great cornerback, but that he has value in the return game. A.J. Green proved why he was the top receiver taken in the 2011 draft by hauling in a long touchdown. Randall Cobb showed his versatility by having a return for a touchdown and catching one as well. While these weren't the only rookies who provided some excitement in week 1, they stood out not only on the gridiron but in card movement.

With the amusement ride we call football card collecting starting it's ascend; the card market will have more increases and decreases than the stock market. I know everyone is hoping like I am that we experience all the increases and no decreases. May your team play well (except against the Seahawks and Patriots) and your players perform. If you haven't checked out the football forums on Sports Card Forum, be sure to come check it out. There's always something happening and some great contests to enter.



Down with the King **By Brad Wingate aka BBonds25**

Since 2009, baseball card collectors have been, well, stuck with one brand of licensed product. Granted, there are about 8 billion different sets from this 1 brand, but that's not the point. The point is, we need another manufacturer in the game. The MLBPA and Major League Properties need to put an end to the monopoly they granted to The Topps Company 2 years ago. Or, at worst, they need to set some new guidelines for the exclusive license they granted. Luckily for them, I came up with a few ideas.

Bring some friends to the party. I've noticed lately that there is a revamped interest in insert cards. It's like 1995 all over again, and in 1995 (as with most of the 90s), the best place to find the best inserts was Donruss. Today, the Donruss name is owned by Panini America, the same company who brought us those quirky little stickers and albums. If the people want inserts, correction, cool inserts, then I think bringing the Donruss name back to the party is the best way to start. They had the reputation for making some of the most attractive, most collectible inserts in the hobby. No offense to Topps, but the inserts they put out, though collectible, leave a lot to be desired. We are treated to the prospect laden Donruss Elite Extra Edition each year, but the set is not licensed, so that means no team names or logos. Personally, I'd like a shiny, die-cut, serial numbered card from Donruss that actually shows Albert Pujols in something other than a gray, airbrushed batting practice jersey.

Have a little control. If Topps is going to produce dozens of different sets each year, then the MLBPA/MLB Properties needs to have a say in what happens, specifically with autographs and game used cards. As much as I appreciate what Jhonny Peralta has done for my Detroit Tigers this season, his autograph has no place in sets like Topps Sterling or Tribute. I also think that the gamed used cards need to fit the price tag of the product. I can't tell you how many times I've read about a members break of Triple Threads or Tribute, only to see them pull a plain white jersey swatch of a semi-star player. It's ridiculous, and I don't think it's fair to collectors. If you're going to charge \$50 -\$200 per pack, then give the people something worth paying for. What is the point of having exclusive agreements with some of the greatest living players to ever step onto the diamond if you are going to make it impossible to pull one of their auto's? I'm not saying put 1000 Hank Aaron autographs into a set, but at least lay off the non-star players.

Show some restraint. Variety is the spice of life, but there is such a thing as too much spice. I'm all for keeping the base Topps set, Topps Heritage, Chrome, and Allen & Ginter. They are all great sets, and are highly collectible. But do we need Opening Day, Gypsy Queen, Lineage, Marquee, National Chicle, and whatever other names they can come up with for pretty much the same set. I'm fine with Triple Threads or Tribute as a mid range product, but pick one, not both. If they are going to allow Topps to produce so many sets (keep in mind that I didn't even mention anything under the Bowman name), then they might as well let Panini/Donruss or Upper Deck come back and play. If not, then reduce the number of sets they are allowed to produce.



work, but I like to think they may. I really just want to see some new old blood back in the hobby to shake things up a bit. Don't get me wrong, I love my chrome, but I also miss those shiny, embossed, die-cut, numbered to 10,000 inserts that were so prominent in my younger collecting days. In short, I miss the way the hobby used to be, before Topps was King of the Diamond.

into their products. So, to fix this, I think that Topps should be made to submit a list of autograph cards they wish to include into their sets. If they cannot produce an autograph of any of these players, then they should be fined. It is ludicrous that collector's are being punished for the company's broken promises. Maybe some hefty fines, or the threat of losing a product the next year will make the redemption epidemic go away.

I also think it would be a great idea if you could choose your redemption. There could be a pre-determined checklist of players, from young stars to aging stars, utility players to fan favorites, and everyone in between. Then, when you pull a redemption card for one of these players, you could choose the player you want from that list. This would be great for team collectors, or for those looking to bolster the ol' trade box.

Now I don't know if any of these ideas would actually



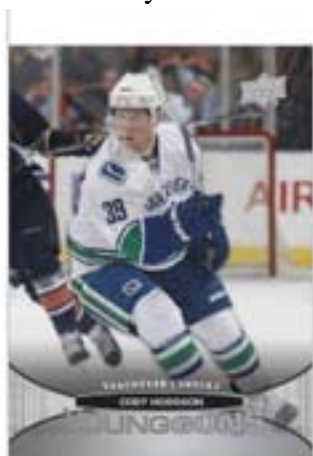


Game On!

By **Richard McAdam aka RGM81**

October. That time of the year when the leaves start to change colour, when the temperature starts to drop, and when sweaters are much more prevalent than t-shirts. And most importantly of all, that time when NHL hockey resumes in full force! As you read this we are mere days away from the beginning of the 2011-12 season and a new quest is underway for 30 teams all vying for Lord Stanley's Cup. Will this be the year?

There are some question marks around the NHL this year – people want to know about the health of Sidney Crosby, if the Bruins can repeat as champions, if the Sabres' off-season spending spree can vault them into contenders, and so much more. One of the many great things about the NHL is the volume of storylines that exist for each season. Every team, nearly every player indeed, has a narrative. For myself as a Montreal Canadiens fan, there are two main questions that will decide the fate of the team in the 2011-12 campaign: 1. Can Carey Price retain his consistent level of excellence over another season? 2. Will a returning trio of Andrei Markov, Max Pacioretty, and Josh Gorges be sufficient to propel the Habs over the Bruins in the race for the Northeast Division? There are, of course, other stories and questions about the team, but these are the two that are seemingly at the forefront of every Habs fan's mind. What are the big narratives for your team this coming season? Be sure to share your thoughts in the Hockey Talk Forums!



With a new NHL season also comes to a new season for hockey cards. There is much to look forward to this year. Vancouver Canucks phenom Cody Hodgson will be a strong candidate to lead the hobby's rookie class. The Oilers are still undecided as to whether #1 overall draft pick Ryan Nugent-Hopkins will make the team out of camp; surely if he steps on the ice after October 6th, his popularity should challenge that of Taylor Hall right out of the gate. For the first time in over a decade, there will be hockey cards starring the Winnipeg Jets. Players such as Dustin Byfuglien, Evander Kane, Ondrej Pavelec and the team's #1 pick Mark Schiefle should all enjoy a new-found following in the hobby as they are now some of the more visible players in the NHL.



Beyond the on-ice stories, we have a new year of products emanating from Upper Deck, Panini, and In The Game. All three companies have announced some of their plans for the new season, and we certainly look forward to some great new releases.

In addition to their usual early-season products such as Artifacts and Upper Deck Series 1, UD has announced a legends-only set called Parkhurst Champions. This set will be similar to the 2006-07 Parkhurst set that was hugely popular with collectors, boasting an incredible roster of hard-signed autographed content.

Panini will continue to build on the success of last year's debut of the Certified and Score releases, promising exciting new variations of popular subsets such as Fabric of the Game and adding in stick memorabilia pieces to Certified and adding new subsets and chase elements to Score.

ITG is gearing up for the 11th edition of Ultimate Memorabilia, which delivers some of the most incredible memorabilia cards the market has ever seen, and they also are set to release Canada vs. The World, an international hockey themed product that will deliver some fantastic cards of some of the greatest players to play for Canada, the United States, Russia, and more.

You can keep track of all the latest product announcements and schedule in the Hockey Card Talk Forum, with a product release calendar to be found here: <http://www.sportscardforum.com/showthread.php?t=1394628>

Contests! SCF has always been proud to deliver amazing contests to its members, and this hockey season is no exception! Last year in the Race For The Trio we gave away an amazing Cup Triple Enshrinements featuring three of the greatest Boston Bruins to ever play the game. This year, we're shifting the focus on to the Bruins' main rival by unveiling The Race For The Price! Thanks to our good friends at StarSide Signatures, we have a special limited edition autographed jersey of Montreal Canadiens goaltender Carey Price! Not only is the jersey signed, it also comes embroidered with the details from Price's first NHL shutout against the Flyers in February 2008. This amazing contest runs all season long and can be found here: <http://www.sportscardforum.com/showthread.php?t=1482902>





And if that's not enough, we've also got another amazing contest: The Ultimate Rivalry! Up for grabs in that contest tickets for the last game of the season at the Bell Centre between the Habs and the Leafs and the opportunity to meet some of the players and get some autographs too! Thanks to the good folks at Legends Depot on that one! Check out the full details here:

<http://www.sportscardforum.com/showthread.php?t=1492404>

As always, keep your eyes on the SCF Contests Forum for all the latest contests, challenges, and give-aways from the Hockey Team! We will be adding more contests throughout the season!

That's all for now! See you around the boards!





SCF Racing Collector Spotlight By Stephen Taylor aka race crazy

Since we in the Nascar hobby are in a bit of a break between releases I have chosen to spotlight a dedicated racing collector from our boards. During the time in between releases I will try to do more of this as all of our great racing collectors deserve recognition for their passion.

Member: nadeau01 johnson48

Name: Jeremy Sebastian

Age: 25

Who Do You Collect: Jimmie Johnson, Casey Mears, David Reutimann, Jerry Nadeau.

Why: I've been a Jimmie Johnson fan since 2000. I was in Watkins Glen, and this (at the time) no-name Busch driver lost his brakes going into turn one. It was one of the scariest crashes I'd ever seen and I was hoping he'd be alright. When he got out of the car and jumped on the roof and celebrated (the fact that he was alive), I instantly became a fan. As for the other three, I always liked the Cartoon Network car as a kid growing up, so that was my attachment to Nadeau. As for Reutimann and Mears, no specific reasons as to why I picked them, just liked the way they carried themselves on and off the track.



Favorite Racing Moment: Jimmie Johnson winning the fall '04 Atlanta race one week after the horrible Hendrick Motorsports plane crash that killed 10 people. That was such a huge win for the entire Hendrick Motorsports organization, and one of the most touching victory lane 'celebrations' I've ever seen in my life.

Favorite Piece from Your Collection: My favorite piece of my collection is my autographed flag. I've been working on it for 10 years now, and currently sit at 68 drivers on there. I don't even want to think about the total number of hours accrued from waiting in autograph lines all these years!





The Chase is on -Who are the Contenders and Pretenders?

Contenders (in order)

1. Jimmie Johnson-the 5 time consecutive defending champion has really had an awful season in a lot of people's eyes. Of course he won a race and found himself leading the points at the end of the regular season but for some reason everyone goes crazy if Johnson isn't winning every week. This year we have seen a more aggressive, less vanilla JJ-especially while amidst a feud with Kurt Busch as of late, but come Chase time expect five-time to be on complete lockdown and focus mode-also expect him to be there come Homestead, like it or not.

2. Kyle Busch-either way he will probably be the story of the Chase. He more than likely will either run like wildfire and be a multiple win driver in the final 10 races or completely implode, as he did after an 8 win regular season effort in 2008. Either way Wild Thing is always a contender as his talent usually overcomes ill-handling racecars. If Kyle can keep his temper in check and his engines from grenading then he can challenge for the title.

3. Jeff Gordon-Gordon appears destined for a run at his 5th title this year. With 3 wins and blinding speed for the majority of the summer stretch Gordon is probably the hottest driver in Nascar along with Brad Keselowski going into the Chase. The veteran seems to have found the right chemistry with crew chief Alan Gustafson to truly make a run at the championship.

4. Carl Edwards-after a blistering and dominant start to the season Edwards ran extremely mediocre in the summer and some engine issues cost him potential wins at both Pocono and Michigan. Along with a crash at Daytona and an ongoing contract negotiation Edwards' summer was not the best. However over the last two weeks the 99 team has come back into form with a potentially winning racecar at Atlanta and the dominant car of the night at Richmond, a track where typically Roush Fenway Racing runs sub par at. This bodes well for Edwards who proved in 2008 that he could run toe to toe with Johnson. If he can stay mistake free and the car doesn't fail him he will be a contender.

5. Kevin Harvick-much like Edwards Harvick's summer was highlighted by mediocre to sometimes awful runs (Bristol) but last week at Richmond Harvick along with Edwards dominated the event with Harvick returning to victory lane. His 4 wins put him at a tie for the points lead going into the Chase with Kyle Busch. If Harvick can maintain his momentum and the RCR program gets on track again he can contend as he did last year.

6. Matt Kenseth-part of the old guard at Roush, Kenseth quietly runs fast and up front as he has done throughout his career. Although not flashy Kenseth is a beast on mile and a half tracks which



make up the majority of the chase schedule. He must improve at short tracks like New Hampshire and Martinsville in order to contend but don't be surprised if he sneaks up on you.

7. Brad Keselowski-going into the chase with nothing to lose Keselowski is the flashy underdog pick of many to surprise some people in the chase and it is entirely possible. Over the late summer stretch Keselowski found new speed in the blue deuce and ever since he has been a perennial top 10 driver. His inexperience in the Chase could haunt him or it could benefit him. It is yet to be seen.

8. Tony Stewart-Stewart himself said he isn't a contender to win the Championship this year due to their inconsistency and he maybe right. But after one race in the Chase and a victory he sits 2nd in points. It remains to be seen if he can hold the consistency. One of the best drivers in the sport has looked at times embarrassing this year (Bristol especially). Stewart recovered nicely at Atlanta, Richmond, and Chicago but from after Loudon is where Stewart's true test will begin.

Pretenders

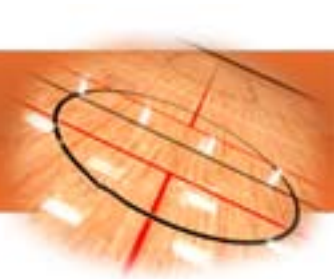
1. Ryan Newman-Newman is extremely consistent but he doesn't have the speed that the 7 above do. Newman's problem along with teammate Tony Stewart is that when they miss the setup, they miss it badly. A plethora of top 20 or worse finishes in the Chase will not win championships even if you do finish in the top 10 the rest of the time.

2. Kurt Busch-Kurt is a past champion and fast enough to contend, but his attitude and his head perhaps still get the best of him more than they should. Kurt must push the rivalry with Jimmie Johnson aside if he is going to come anywhere close to contending for the title, and it remains to be seen if it is indeed over.

3. Denny Hamlin-last year's contender to take the title away from Johnson has had a sub par year. With only one win and countless falters in the regular season Hamlin barely squeaked into the Chase. The performance has not been there all season and it is extremely difficult to turn it on come chase time. It remains to be seen whether Hamlin is still haunted from last year's choke.

4. Dale Earnhardt Jr.-sorry Jr. nation but when your driver and your team is just happy to be here and not thinking about the championship that is a cause for concern. No doubt a major improvement over the last two years, Jr. has a better future in front of him but no chance at the Championship this year.

Who Wins?-Take your pick from the top 8-seriously-any of them could win-it has been the most competitive season in Nascar's history-it will all come down to who gets hot and who has bad luck. One of those 8 will win-bank on it.



Basketball Happenings

By Jay Weger aka Jay520 and John Broman aka XxVisionxX

Contests & Winners

This last month there was some nice cards entered into the Theme Weeks contests. Theme Week #24 was 2 Player Game used Jersey cards in which Arty won with a 02-03 UD Glass 1 2 Combo Jersey of MJ/Kobe 20/125. Theme Week #25 was First or Last made and saw tristan20 win with a 04-05 Topps Luxury Box Main Reserved Wilt Chamberlain 1/25. tristan20 also won the next Theme Week #26 with a 05-06 SP Game Used Letter Patch of Wilt Chamberlain "R" 7/11. Theme Week #27 was Random Auto of no name players that XxViSiOnxX won with a 04-05 Bowman rc auto of Sofoklis Schortsianitis. As usual if you think you have a card to win Theme Weeks please enter!!

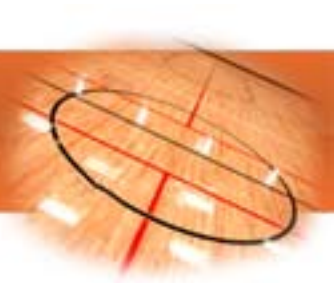
Be sure to check the basketball contest forums for possible contests coming when the NBA season hopefully resumes in November. The Serial # contest will resume soon with an interesting way to win card prizes. You can win cc for each correct GUESS and if you have the most GUESSed right at the end of the month you win a card prize (tbd). Contest is open to all members and staff.

Hobby News

In hobby news this last month saw the release of Panini Elite Black that goes for around \$250 a box that has just 8 cards (2base/99, 3 GU, 3 auto). Some collectors have decided to pass on this high-end product while others have got it just because it is new. The reason some are passing on this product is because they feel for such a high-end set it should not have manufactured NBA Logoman patches but real NBA Logoman GU patches and some of the cut signatures are bad looking. The secondary market price is falling and the box price due to this. While this is the 3rd straight high-end product to be released by Panini this summer, they do not have another scheduled release except for a revamped version of NBA Hoops due to the lockout. With that being the case many collectors are hoping for the return of Topps and Upper Deck to the NBA card market.

NBA News

The NBA lockout is still going on but the owners and players are starting to come closer together on key points. On September 1 owners and players met for 6 hours for only the second time since the lockout started and announced more meetings for the next week. The September 8 meeting was going well as they were working on BRR (basketball related revenue) and salary cap issues. Unfortunately talks broke down on September 12 due to the difference of views on the salary cap situation; no meetings have been planned since. Player Union president Derek Fisher asks for player solidarity and says no need for desertification in a email to player reps. Owner's were accused of having a rift amongst themselves over the hard cap but NBA Commissioner David Stern came back and said the owners were in solid agreement. And as of September 23 the leaGUE has postponed training camp and several exhibition games but has agreed to contact the other party to schedule dates next week to meet. If the season is to start on time these are some key dates things need to get done.



- Oct. 1 – Agreement reached on money.
- Oct. 4 – All remaining issues settled.
- Oct. 5-19 – Agreement in writing.
- Oct. 20 – Free agency and players report to teams.
- Oct. 21-31 – Training camps start and teams play 2 exhibition games.
- Nov. 1 – NBA season starts.

Will the owners and players be able to get this done in a timely manner to play a full season or are we heading into a shortened season that may not get started till Thanksgiving, Christmas or even the New Year?

While the lockout continues it doesn't mean basketball isn't being played. Many top stars are playing in summer pro leagues in big cities like Baltimore, L. A., Philadelphia and New York to keep in shape while the lockout continues. Also there is the FIBA European tournament being held overseas with many stars playing for their home countries. The Championship was won by Spain (2nd straight) over France. Spain had both Marc and Pau Gasol, Serge Ibaka and Rudy Fernandez while France had Tony Parker, Boris Diaw and Joakim Noah. A few more players have announced they will play overseas like Fernandez in Barcelona and Gallinari in Italy. Kobe got an offer of 6.7 million to play for an Italian team and is considering it since there is no sign of the lockout ending. 3 former Nugget free agents Wilson Chandler, Kenyon Martin and J.R. Smith have decided to play in China. The only issue is that there is no out for them when the lockout ends and they will not be able to return to play until the Chinese Basketball season is over in March. Michael Jordan made headlines when he publicly talked about the lockout and got fined 100 thousand dollars, which is a drop in the bucket for him. The league and the refs came to a new 5 year agreement to continue officiating games. And lastly Ron Artest is no more as his name is officially changed to Metta World Peace and he was the 1st contestant eliminated from Dancing With The Stars on ABC.

Pack/Box Breaks

Hey Basketball Fanatics! Although the summer is over things are still heating up in the Basketball World especially in the Box Break Section. With the newest hot release of the most anticipated set from Panini thus far.... 2010-11 Panini Elite Black Basketball. This has taken the Hobby to a whole new level. The designs are far better than any previous release and members are flocking over to get a first hand look from their local card stores. So come on by and take a look at the most recent product breaks.

2010-11 Panini Elite Black Basketball had people taking a chance on this high-end product to see if they could hit a big cash card. McPUG took a gamble and got a box to pull a Karl Malone/Hakeem Olajuwon Dual patch booklet/25 as the big hit with autos of Mutumbo/99, Kurt Rambis/149, and Al Jefferson status aspirations base/5. jortiz1012 also bought a box and came away with a Blake Griffin/John Wall/DeMarcus Cousins triple rc auto /49. spoodini opened a box to pull a Walt Frazier auto/24 and a Isaiah



Thomas /Ben Gordon Passing the Torch dual NBA Logoman patch + GU/99. theGUru might have had the best box getting a Steve Nash dual GU/99, John Wall dual GU/99 and a sick Kobe/Elgin Baylor NBA Logoman patch + auto/99 redemption.

2010-11 National Treasures had a few breaks as well this month with massey opening 2 boxes to pull a David Lee prime GU/25, Al Jefferson Colossal prime GU/10, Sean Elliot auto/25, Evan Turner NBA Gear triple GU auto/49, John Stockton prime GU/25, Duncan Colossal GU/99, Jodie Meeks Timeline GU auto/30, Connie Hawkins ABA auto/99 and Timofey Mozgov RPA/99. CardCookie13 opened a 4 box case pulling a Daniel Orton RPA/99, Stephen Curry Colossal GU auto/12, Clyde Drexler NBA Logoman patch auto/10 from box 1. Box 2 he got a Rose Colossal GU/99, Al Horford auto/25, Mutumbo Colossal GU auto/25, Pippen HOF prime GU/25, Brandon Roy 1/1 base and a sick Patrick Patterson RPA/25. Box 3 – Durant Colossal # GU/99, Joe Dumars HOF GU auto/49, Kevin Garnett All-NBA patch/25 and a Julius Erving HOF auto/10. Box 4 – Wes Unseld All-NBA auto/99, Toney Douglas Timeline Team name prime GU/25, Stephen Curry team logo patch auto/99 and a DeMarcus Cousins RPA/99.

Other stuff opened was 10-11 Gold Standard by theslowz who hit a Derrick Rose Gold Stars 14kt gold 4/8 from one box. He also got a box of 10-11 SP Authentic to hit a MJ Supreme Court floor auto 4/5!!! Show 15 bought a box of 10-11 Ultimate Collection and hit a sick Bill Russell All-Time Draft auto 2/5!!! 41 Fan hit a nice Kobe Championship Materials Signature auto/25 redemption out of a box of 10-11 Timeless Treasures. spuds1961 bought 6 packs of 07-08 Stadium Club to come away with a Durant rc/1999!! And in an old school break doublexthebeast hit a very sweet Hakeem Olajuwon Precious Metal Gems Red/100 out of 97-98 Metal Universe.

Super Collector Additions

This Month in Super Collector/Hall of Fame Section I would like to Congratulate CavFanatic21 and LeChuck. CavFanatic21 has amassed an astounding 36% of autos, 49% of GU and 100% of true rookie cards of J.J. Hickson. LeChuck has put together an impressive collection of Luol Deng. With there dedication and years of chasing they have finally reached the pinnacle of their collection and have earned the right to a Super Collector Badge. It's a very difficult task to obtain the percentage needed to qualify for a Super Collector Badge and these 2 have done it. So come on through and give a hand to them for their Awesome Achievement in the Hobby. Here is CavFanatic21's 5 top cards: **5.** 09 Topps Co-Signers Silver HyperFractor RC /25, **4.** 09 UD Exquisite Year One Auto RC /10, **3.** 09 UD Exquisite Noble Nameplates Patch Auto RC /25, **2.** 09 UD Black Gold Quad Patch Auto RC /30, **1.** 09 UD Premier Gold Patch Auto RC 1/1!!



Rule Changes

By Kevin O'Connor aka rainman67ko

I am an advisor or moderator on the SCF Disputes Team. I will be writing articles related to the Disputes process, best trading practices, and online trading execution, which is the follow through after the trade is confirmed and completed.

This month I am going to address some changes in the rules. Know the rules at SCF makes for a more enjoyable hobby experience. The rules are put in place to govern activities on SCF that if left unchecked may be detrimental to other traders, the community, or even the hardware/software that powers the SCF website. While some rules may seem inconsequential, and others obvious, or significant, as a member of the SCF community you should be familiar with them all.

The staff at SCF works to refine and adjust rules as the needs of the trading community change. These rules changes are at the suggestion of members, traders, and moderators alike. The intent is not to over legislate but rather to create a fair environment where respect and integrity are paramount and all traders are welcomed. Much discussion and debate come before a rules change. Once consensus is reached the language is approved and the rule is instituted or modified.

Here are 2 recent rules changes you should know about:

VI Trade Manager Rules and VII Trade Feedback (added bold text)

All trades must be made with the trade manager if you want a trade moderated, no exceptions. Failure to do so voids any right to moderation. Accordingly, if you choose to ignore the Must Send First status of a member in a trade, you waive the right for the staff to assist you should a problem arise. If a person is sending first in the trade, please specify this in the terms of the trade in the trade manager. Trades must be sent within 3 working days of confirming in the Trade Manager unless you have spoken with your trading partner about when you will be sending. **This applies to paypal payments as well.**

Confirmed deals may be put into dispute status after 14 business days of it being confirmed. **If your deal has you receiving paypal as payment you may put it into dispute after 5 days.** Do not leave feedback for a deal until the dispute MOD tells you to. If you have more than 1 dispute filed against you at a time then you will be given a No Buying/Selling/Trading tag until all of your current all deals (confirmed open deals) are completed. Then the tag will be removed. Failure to follow the rules only slows down the dispute process and the time it takes the dispute MOD to work your case.



V Posting Guidelines: (removed bold text)

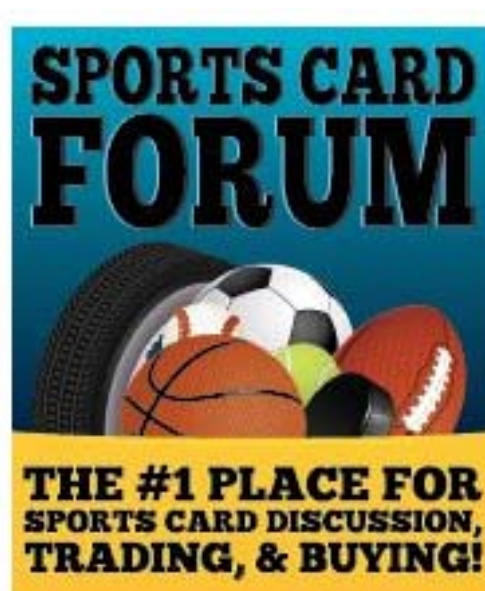
Bumping a thread is only allowed after 8 hours have passed since you last posted if you are the last poster. Also, you may not bump more than once in an 8-hour period. **You are not permitted to bump a thread if it is still located on the first page of the forum.** Bumping is considered any post that is not in response to a previous post. This includes items such as “ttt”, “bump”, “list updated”, etc. Please note that this rule applies to the trading and buying/selling forums.

Best practices: Familiarize yourself with the rules on SCF. If you're not sure about something just ask a moderator and they will be happy to help you.

Please contact me at SCF with any questions regarding the SCF Disputes process or trading execution and I will try to answer immediately. I may also incorporate ideas into future articles published here in the Sports Card Forum magazine.

You can consult the SCF rules here: <http://www.sportscardforum.com/view.php?pg=rules>

And if you have some suggestions on rules or other issues, please feel free to air them out in the feedback forum: <http://www.sportscardforum.com/forumdisplay.php?f=386>





Index Cards

By Mike Greene aka Indyreds

Blank 3x5 index cards have been a staple of the autograph community for years, but has their time started to come to an end? They have such a low cost and they allow you to have something for anyone to sign at the fraction of the cost of other items with the same flexibility like a baseball. I can not count the number of times I was thrilled over the years to have one when running into former players or roving instructors at minor league baseball games. It is wonderful to not have to prepare cards or photos for everyone at an event and just take a stack of 3x5's knowing that even should if you ran into someone you did not expect to run into at that event, you would have something for them to sign. The blank side allows such a clean area for a signature and is large enough for inscriptions or personalizations. The lined side allows plenty of room to print information like who signed, where and when. Baseballs do not give you that advantage. They are easy to store and look great framed with a photo and mounted on the wall. When mailing cards out for TTM requests I always add an index card to help protect my card and sometimes find them signed with my return as well. When mailing to a retired player it has resulted in some interesting items when asking a simple question of the player and finding they answered in my return envelope. Finding a nice quality signature on an index card will usually run you much less than a signed photo. It is typical to find some Hall Of Fame members for under five dollars on eBay. Certain members of our autograph community have even begun making their own cut signature custom cards from index cards! They seem to be the perfect thing for collectors. They are easy to use, low cost and can be transformed into wonderful wall displays.

The only problem with index cards are the times that we live in. A good number of sports agents and even some sports leagues are now advising players not to sign any blank items like index cards. The fear is that scammers will use that autograph to create forgeries or even make a fake signed document. I have had players who are in low single A baseball refuse to sign index cards. The days of taking a stack of blank index cards and going to the NFL events, baseball games and basketball games are far behind us. Index cards still can be used, but they do need some prep work first now. It is something I discovered when making custom photos for TTM requests. The first few custom photos that I had made had open areas where hopefully the player would sign my item. I could not understand why many of the items I sent away for autographs had the player sign in other areas of my custom photos besides the area that was so plainly made for a signature. I learned with time to shade the team or league logo in the signature area and have had much better success with the signature going where I wanted them. The same thing can be done for your index cards. Fade out the team or league logo on your index cards. Many players are then fine with signing over that logo. One of the things that I liked most about the days of blank index cards is how clean the autograph looked over an empty area, but that is what these young players are being taught to avoid. It does raise the cost of your index cards and the time factor of just grabbing them and going. They do however still look great when framed with a photo, can be used to get many different players and are still inexpensive when compared to alternatives like cards, photos or balls. I know that many of the old timers will still sign them and some players like Fred Lynn, Lynn Swan and Joe Morgan are only good for index cards, but times are changing and you should be prepared to change with them. It might be a little more work, but you can still use index cards for younger players with a little bit of work on your part ahead of time. They do still have a place in our hobby and can for years to come.



Ceiling Lifted - Hope you Don't Notice

By Joe Mosley aka LGB Cards



I am extremely excited for this upcoming season in hockey. I have been a Blues fan my entire life and have been waiting for this for a long time. Here in St. Louis we have a history of getting players after their prime, Lalime, Fuhr, Gretzky, and so on, but things have changed here in St. Louis. Not since the Blues run at the cup, almost 40 years ago now, have the Blues had such promise between the pipes as we now do in Jaroslav Halak. Halak set many Blues franchise records this past season and he played with a fractured hand and an upper

body injury most of the year. Many people don't realize the history of the Blues and despite not winning the cup there is a tradition of winning. The Blues made the Stanley Cup finals every year for their first 3 years of existence but lost all 3 times. The Blues have made 34 playoff appearances in 42 years with 5 of those years they did not qualify coming in the last 6 seasons and having a 25 year stretch of qualifying. Despite this history many people do not look at the Blues as a threat and rightfully so as the last years have been dismal. The Blues are going to make a strong run this year and shock many people who think they are another "small market" or "redneck team", which yes I have heard both of those terms attached to the Blues.

This year will be very different for many reasons. Our new captain David Backes was second to only Zdeno Chara in plus/minus, we were one of only three or four teams to have four 50 point scorers and there were 3 more that were over 40. Halak set new records and new marks that were owned by Jacques Plante who led the Blues to 3 straight Stanley Cup finals. Matt D'Agostini was added into the Halak trade as a second thought and fell only 4 points shy of the 50 point mark, Alex Pietrangolo would have likely won rookie of the year honors if he had not played 1 game over the limit to be considered a rookie in his first full year of action. He recorded 43 points, which was 20th best in the league, behind and in front of every day names like Chara, Doughty, Weber, Boyle, Yandle, and Lidstrom. His newly acquired counterpart Kevin Shattenkirk finished 1 spot behind Pietrangolo in his rookie season. TJ Oshie has fully recovered from his ankle surgery that placed him out for 33 games and there is hope for David Perron to also be returning to the lineup this year after being knocked out for the season 10 games in. Chris Stewart was acquired from Colorado at the trade deadline scoring 23 points in 26 games wearing the blue note. The biggest difference from last year to this year is the two free agents we picked up, Jason Arnott and Jamie Langenbrunner who bring three Stanley Cup championships to the Blues locker room and a combined 32 NHL seasons. These two will bring the veteran mentality and leadership that the Blues have lacked in past years.



All of these things add up to the best potential for a Blues team since the President's Cup winning team of 2000, and this team seems more determined than ever to prove they are for real. The Blues will finish the year by winning what could arguably be the toughest division in hockey over Detroit, Columbus, Chicago, and Nashville. They will go into the playoffs with the #2 seed in the west, bettered by only the Canucks. They will end third overall in the NHL in points behind the Presidents Cup winning Capitals and the Canucks who hold the first seed in their conference. The Blues will win round one in five games and round two in six games and will meet the Nashville Predators in the West finals, a team that the Blues beat out to win the division. It will be a hard fought series with each team winning on home ice until the Blues win one on the road and close out the series in the sixth game. In the Stanley Cup finals the Blues will face off against the Capitals, the Capitals take game 1 and the Blues get 2. Once back in St. Louis the inexperience of Vokoun will start to show as the Blues will take the next three games to win the cup, ending a forty four year championship drought, one of the longest in professional sports. Jaroslav Halak will win the Vezina and Pietrangelo will be a nominee for the Norris but not take the award home.





A Lesson Learnt in an Unlikely Place By Andrew Hoyley aka Andrewhoya



One Friday, I went to the Chantilly, VA card show with my uncle. I had just gotten paid in the morning, so I had a few extra bucks to spend. I got together the cards I needed to complete my sets for 2002 Topps and a few random other ones. I used the Inventory Manager on www.sportscardforum.com, which lessened my work! I love that thing. Anyways, I also got the list of Andrew Bailey cards I needed (which I left at home. Heh, oh well). I met my uncle there, before we went our separate ways.

I did my usual tour of the place to see what I was interested in. Friday was the first day the card show was there, and we were there pretty early, so there wasn't too much. I found a few guys with thousands of random base cards, and noted where they were so I could come back to them. I finished up my circle, and headed to the first table.

It took me a matter of seconds to find the set I needed. 2002 Topps is outlined in gold, front and back. I got out my list, and then realized I also left my pen at home, probably right next to my Andrew Bailey list. Not off to a good start. I dug around a few piles of the bright cards and made a pile of the ones I needed. I knocked out about 80% of my wantlist, which was good. I still needed a pen, so I looked around for one. The second to last table I went to had a sharpie, which he let me have. I went to sit down and cross out the ones I just got.

Once that task was completed, I started my search again for the cards I needed. There were over 300 booths there, and people were blocking many of them, so this was not an easy task. I couldn't find any more tables that had what I needed, but I still had a good amount of money. I started looking for Andrew Bailey cards, but also came up empty. I decided I would get a box to break since I couldn't find anything else to get. I looked around for a good price, and saw a guy who I had bought from in previous shows. He gave me a good deal on a box of 2006 Upper Deck Artifacts. I bought it, thinking I could sell my hits later, and sat down to see what I got.

The box had ten packs and four cards in each. In the first pack I opened, I pulled an Eric Gagné GU / 150. It brought back memories of Gagné in his prime a few years ago, but he pretty much disappeared. I continued opening, until I came to pack four. In that one, I pulled an Ian Kinsler auto /800. I continued opening and got two more good cards; a Ken Griffey Jr GU and a Felipe Lopez GU. I was fairly happy in what I got.

I went to see my uncle, who wasn't quite done yet. He said he only had a few more minutes to go, so I took one last look around to see if I missed anything. Sure enough, one of the tables had an Andrew Bailey card I needed for my personal collection! It was a Bowman Chrome Orange Refractor /25. I



asked the dealer what the price of it was. He started out at thirty, but quickly changed to 25. The box I had just bought had lowered my cash to about \$14, which only would have been about half of what he was asking for. If I didn't get the box, I would have had one of the nicest cards of Bailey to add to my collection.

I went to this card show looking to increase my PC of Andrew Bailey (which I did... by one base card) and to finish off some sets. I came out of the card show with much more than just cards.

I will never again buy something just to buy it. I was hoping the Artifacts would have gifted me with some nice, low-numbered cards that I could sell for a quick buck. Instead, I hurt my chances of quickly completing my Andrew Bailey super collection. Instead of getting a card I truly wanted, I "wasted" my money on cards that I am just trying to sell...





Meeting your Favorite Player (My Story)

By David Oby III aka CavFanatic21

There may not be too many people who can say they have met their favorite athlete sometime in their lifetime. Some can say they met a player, which then made them their favorite player. However, this was different for me. Many members may know, my favorite athlete is JJ Hickson, of the Sacramento Kings. Of course, he used to be on the Cleveland Cavaliers (But that's an entirely different story). I have actually met him four times over the last year, and hope to meet him more. I can tell a simple story of how I have gone to a signing of him at a local auto show, or got his autograph prior to a game (pretty easy to do with him). But I will tell a story that is quite a bit more unique, that I know nobody else has ever experienced in their lifetime.

Back during the 2009-10 NBA Season, I was given the opportunity to go to a game in Philadelphia between the 76ers and Cavaliers. I was thrilled just to be able to go to a game in another arena, but was also able to sit courtside...right next to the Cavaliers bench (and to Will Smith's seats – who unfortunately wasn't there). I arrived at shoot around, and was still amazed at this opportunity. At this time, I had never tried to get IP Autographs, let alone did I know about them, really. I was mostly there for the game itself. I was amazed that I was able to be within just a few feet of maybe the best player currently playing in the NBA – LeBron James. Thankfully, for both mine and his sake, this was before the “Decision”.



Once the game started, I looked to my right and realized I was sitting next to Sebastian Telfair, another one of my favorite Cavaliers. We were actually able to have a conversation as well about his injury (hence why he was sitting at the end of the bench). At another point in the game, Delonte West had been subbed out of the game. The entire team gave him high fives, and I figured “Why not try myself?”, and sure enough Delonte gave me a high-five . This would be enough to make me thrilled, but things got better. My seat was actually on the wooden court.

There was just enough room between my feet and the baseline to fit two workers in charge of the players' towels. At one point in the game I asked one of the towel boys if he would be able to get me a towel from a player. JJ Hickson had just gotten back on the bench and was given a towel. For the next five or six minutes, my eyes were glued on that towel. I asked the “towel boy” if he could get me THAT towel (it had been left on the bench while all the players came together for a huddle during a timeout). He didn't really give me a clear answer. Later in the timeout, he went to clear out the towels, to send back into the locker room to be cleaned (I hope). As he grabbed the one Hickson had been using, he tossed it over to me. I was thrilled to say the least.



At this point, I was now focused on trying to get it signed. However, when I asked Hickson if he could sign, he said he could only sign before or after games. I was happy, but obviously wished I could have gotten it signed. Don't worry this opportunity would present itself in the future (a year later).

A little less than a year later, when the Cavaliers were playing the 76ers in Philadelphia the next season, I was given the same opportunity. By this time, I had improved my in person autographing abilities, and was determined to get him to sign the towel. On my arrival to the arena, I was shocked to find out who I was sitting next to. I am sure that every Cavs fan would love to meet this man more than anyone else in the entire organization... Dan Gilbert, owner of the Cavs.



I was also able to meet Cavaliers GM Chris Grant, and a few Cavaliers legends such as Austin Carr and World B. Free. I felt it was extremely ironic I was just as excited about sitting with Dan Gilbert as I was being close to LeBron James a year earlier. If I could tell myself back in 2009 that I would rather sit by Dan Gilbert than LeBron James now, I may have slapped my future-self. I was able to talk to Dan for two of the four quarters of the game, which was worth the entire trip. As we said our goodbyes, he handed me and the people with me passes with the 76ers logo and a few other codes on it. We were confused at first, and he explained they were locker room passes. I had never felt so happy in years, knowing I would be able to meet players in the locker room. He told us that we could just follow the players right after the game as they exit into the tunnel. We did so, but couldn't go into the locker room immediately (Coach Scott had to give his post game talk – and they had won, so it wasn't as long as usual). He then came out of the locker room for an interview which he does at the end of every game. If you are not familiar, it would look like this on television (can't find the video from that game unfortunately):



http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9mW22y_eXbk

The point is, I could have yelled anything I possibly wanted and it would be heard by thousands in the Cleveland area. After this, I met with Dan Gilbert again, as well as his children, the Assistant GM, and



Eric Snow, former Cleveland Cavalier and Philadelphia 76er. We talked more about the team of course, and were then lead into the locker room. Many of the players were in the showers, but a few had been dressing into street clothes, and Daniel “Boobie” Gibson had been doing an interview, also on television. We could have stayed in there, but decided to wait outside, on the other side of the locker room, and greet the players when they went towards the bus. I then met players like Jawad Williams (who was another favorite of mine, and who grew up in the same area as me) and Tony Battie (former Cleveland Cavalier). Not to mention a guy named JJ Hickson. He had come out of the locker room and I immediately asked him for an autograph. He was very willing to simply because I was the only one there trying to get an autograph, and the people with me were sure to tell him how much of a fan I am of him. He then signed the towel, chatted, and took pictures with me. As said earlier, this isn’t the only time I have met him, but this is easily the most memorable. I hope to be able to meet him again in the future, but it will be a little more difficult with him on another team. I believe this could me the most memorable moment as a Cleveland Cavaliers fan for the rest of my life, and I hope you enjoyed hearing it as much as I enjoyed having it.





Young Collectors Show them Respect
By Brian Giaquinta aka Size17shoes

In the not-so-distant past, I was visiting a local card shop looking for some common football cards. I use these cards when I send away for through the mail autograph requests. While I was in this store, a young pair of teens came walking through the door. They brought along with them a box of cards. Upon further inspection, I realized these young men only had common cards from the early 1990s inside the box. As I stood and observed the interaction between the shop owner and these two young men, something became apparent: the shop owner does not like children in his store. These two youngsters were verbally toyed with by the shop owner and his colleagues for obviously not knowing the value of the cards they possessed. I was highly offended so I vacated the premises without even making a purchase.

Did those young men deserve the abuse they received for just being two uninformed sports card collectors? Where has the time gone when children were the centre piece of the hobby of sports card collecting? Nowadays, it seems to be non-existent. The hobby has gone away to the adults with the most cash, with packs being outrageously priced. I remember going to Ben Franklin's and purchasing cello packs of 1981 Topps Football for seventy-five cents a pack.

Growing up, my grade school had a card trading club that met every morning before classes started. This was in the 80s before the creation of the Beckett or the Tuff Stuff magazine. We would just sit around a table opening packs until someone wanted to trade even up. Those were some of the best times of my life. I remember picking up Montana rookies by the hand full before he became huge. Too bad I never got to enjoy them because my late brother used to torment me by placing my cards in the spokes of his bicycle.

Back to these young men, I believe shop owners should become more sympathetic to our youth. Our youth of today, are bombarded with video games, Pokémon, and computer usage, making it harder for our hobby to grow amongst young collectors. There should be programs established to promote our hobby for young men and women, so they become knowledgeable about cards, players, and even proper storing techniques. The card companies should make more promotions geared towards children to spark an even greater interest.

I had planned to open a card shop with a club for youngsters to trade cards amongst one another. By doing so it would promote social activity, a passion for card collecting, and build lasting friendships. Unfortunately, I didn't have the necessary resources to open my store. It will just take a little longer for this business idea to become official.



Over the years, I worked with many young people and I tried to implement a card reward system. When someone did a great act of kindness, or they did well in school, I would give them a card or an autographed item from my personal collection. To see these young people light up after receiving these rewards were some of the most priceless moments in my life. It was like it was Christmas and they received what they had on the list. I still get choked up thinking of these moments.

So, back to the store owner, why would you try to alienate young people from your shop? Does it come down to a greed issue? A wise man always said, "Don't judge a book by its cover." Dealers need to realize because a young person comes into your store, doesn't mean they can't afford to be there or committing a crime.

Dealers please start reaching out to our youth, for they are the future of the hobby. When young people frequent your shop, treat them as well as an adult who would make large purchase. Word of mouth advertising will make you or break you in the business world. With today's information age, one bad review can cost you customers.

In conclusion, we must assure that the young are incorporated into the hobby we all love, for they are our future. The dealers need to give breaks so more youngsters can enjoy card collecting. I've witnessed way to much age bias in this hobby. There's no room for it and must be stopped.



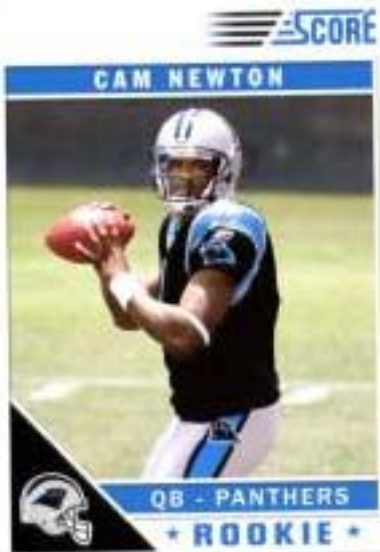


How Cards Have Helped Save my Life By Michael Barton aka MonticelloCards

This hobby has saved my life! I have always had addiction problems, and I have been places I wouldn't send my worst enemy to. But two years ago, I began to change. I became spiritual (not Religious) and found God, and in order to continue being successful (Made Presidents List at College) I moved to upstate New York about 12 years ago. I split time – summers here and winters on Long Island. It was a very hard transition, but 8 years ago we moved to NEPA and I found a job I loved being the general manager of the store. Eventually, wrestling and cards got me into the wrestling business. I wish I could give proper thanks, but I have been sanctioned in regards to who these companies are. It's okay – I was mad for a while but realized its just another life lesson. They feel like it is a horrible idea to have a former addict use their name, even in a positive article. I worked for this coffee company for five years, and in the wrestling business for two plus. But wrestling was my greatest dream and biggest downfall!

I don't need to go into detail, partly because I don't need to tell you everything and there are some stories that I still cannot share. But I slipped from my path one night, hanging out with as Multi-Time WWE and TNA world champion. Of course I want a beer! Took me a year to get it together, and I can vouch for damage done. Having a second surgery to try to fix my knee and elbow surgery for major nerve damage and atrophy. The sad thing is I am only 35, and shouldn't be having these issues at this age. But I went to the Recovery Center in Monticello in 2009, and that's where I rediscovered my passion for cardboard and found my faith in God.

Cards give me something to do when I get bored. I use the HALT (Hungry, angry, lonely, tired) method to always stay cool under any pressure situation. But I think my boredom in life contributed to my relapse. And now, although I don't buy hobby boxes because I cannot afford them, I am always getting blasters when I go food shopping at Walmart. I will not lie, this is not an easy disease to win against. It is a daily program of simple living that helps me.



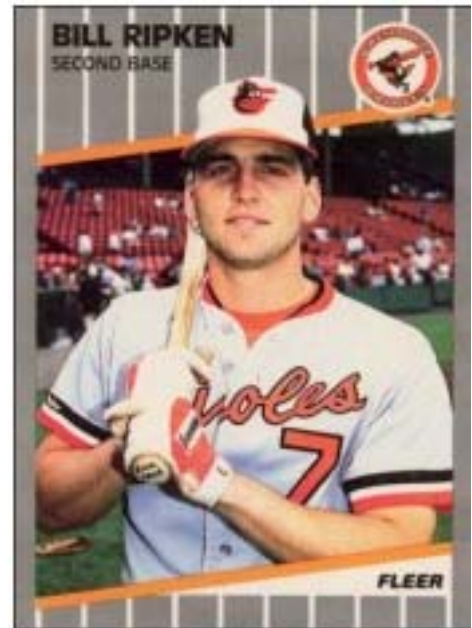
Cards save my life everyday. How? Simply put, if I get a little hyper dealing with some issues, I can get in the car and be there in five minutes. But I always ask an emergency question if something overwhelms me – do I go and do something stupid, or buy a little 2011 Bowman and 2011 Rookies and Stars? This question is always answered with the latter response. Yes, I use cards to fulfil a need sometimes. Pack ripping is a passion of mine – and thanks to Walmart – I always get my new fix. I take recovery extremely seriously. I have found many things in the two plus years I have been clean. I am a college student now. I help others without wanting anything in return. And I collect cards, especially 2011 Score (Hey, at 99 cents a pack, its an easy purchase). So how exactly does it work? Allow me more time to explain.



Cards help me learn patience and discipline. It takes time to build sets, and while the Internet helps, it's hard to find all the cards you need in the big sets. I read all the information on the base cards – I have learned so much through reading informative card backs. Maybe a superstar is a collector like us, and they put it out there. With the Internet, it is easier to find any type of other cards like inserts game/event used and or authentic autographs. I get more excitement out of pulling a cool looking card – whether it be a base card with a sweet action shot or a game used or autograph. Even the cheap autos I love.

I wish I had more money, but being in college there are some interesting challenges you face. But I get cards when I can, even bulk base cards, because if you pay attention to detail (another

trait I learned thanks to cards – I remember discovering the 1989 Fleer Billy Ripken error swear word card). Ever since, I always pay attention to the detail of cards, yet another trait I have learned thanks to the hobby.



I am ecstatic about this hobby. I stay positive and stick with the cool traders on our board. I used to be here to strictly buy and sell and make money, but now I collect everything involved with cards – and I set up completion challenges for myself to never get bored. Thank you to everyone involved in this hobby and SCF, it's the exclusive place I trade, and

the greatest card trading site on the Internet.



Morning Skate

By Karine Hains aka Pheeb888

For the third year in a row, the Montreal Canadiens are treating NHL hockey starved Quebec City to a preseason game this weekend. That is in itself an event worth noting but what's more, today also marks the one year anniversary of "La Marche Bleue". You might not know about that event but a year ago today 60 000 people walked to the Battlefield Park in Quebec to show everyone who cared how much they want an NHL team in town. Sure they are still waiting but at least we now know that Mr. Bettman is not too proud to erase past mistakes, after all the Jets are back so there is still hope for the Nordiques.

While there are plenty of activities planned to commemorate the anniversary tomorrow, today belongs to the Habs. They are scheduled to take to the ice tonight at Le Colisée against the Tampa Bay Lightning in a match that may mean little but is still sold out. What's more, both teams had a morning skate at the arena this morning and allowed the public to watch. Needless to say countless fans were happy to take them up on the offer and made the trip into town bright and early this morning.



The Bolts took the ice first at 10.30 while plenty of fans were still outside waiting to see the Habs players arrive and hopefully get a few autographs. Some fans were still out there when the team bus turned up but they were left bitterly disappointed when the bus pulled straight into the building and they didn't even get a chance to catch a glimpse of their favorites. Disappointed they were but they nevertheless made their way into the building to watch the morning skate.

By the time they got to their seats, the Lightning's practice was already in full swing; Guy Boucher was working on face-off skills with his centres while his assistant coaches were supervising some set plays. About 10 minutes later though, all those in attendance were treated to an excellent show: a breakaway contest featuring all of the big guns, well the whole team to be exact but do I really need to spell out for you who the crowd wanted to see? Stamkos, Lecavalier and St-Louis got the biggest cheers especially the latter, being a hometown favorite. To my surprise however, the one player who truly stood out during this improvised contest was Teddy Purcell. One has to admit that the kid has some skills, pulling all kind of moves and scoring three goals before Roloson was finally able to stop him. Once the contest was over, the team saluted the crowd and received a big ovation as a thank you before most of the regulars retreated to the locker room. A few players stayed behind and carried on practising before signing autographs for the fans...unfortunately none of the stars indulged the fans.

At 11.30, the Habs took to the ice for their morning skate. While they will be the home team tonight, the good people of Quebec do not seem intent on letting them forget that they are not their beloved Fleurdelisés for part of the crowd bood quite loudly. Having just watched Tampa Bay put on quite a



spirited display for the fans, I have to admit that the Habs practice seemed lacklustre and lifeless. I am aware that this is only the preseason, however, if I was Jacques Martin, I would be somewhat worried by the apparent lack of energy as my team is readying itself for its last exhibition game.



There was no breakaway contest for the Habs, just plain old practice with a good chunk of time and energy devoted to the power play. Judging by what we saw on the ice this morning, the first power play unit should feature Gomez, Gionta and Pacioretty up front and Subban and Plekanec on the blue line. Cammaleri, Kostitsyn and Desharnais will be part of the second power play unit. After the PP focus exercise, the D-men started taking booming shots with Gionta in front of the net trying his best to redirect everything, yes a good number of shots ended up in the net but do not rejoice too fast Habs fans, there was no goaltender between the pipes as Price had already retreated to the locker room.

After 40 minutes, there were barely any players left on the ice aside from those who are currently injured and not playing such as Eller and Moen who were working with Perry Pearn. Overall, it was interesting to see the practice but at this stage, I find the Habs' display somewhat worrying. Oh and for those who wondered how the Habs would cope without Kirk Muller who used to take up a lot of responsibilities during both practices and games, well, fear not, Jacques Martin has got other assistants ready to work while he mostly observes what his team is capable of...



With that said, I better get ready for tonight's game on which I will report tomorrow. If the morning skate was anything to go by though, I'm not optimistic regarding the Habs' odds of ending their preseason on a high note...



Hope Springs Eternal By Karine Hains aka Pheeb888



That's another preseason in the books for the Montreal Canadiens. While most of the Habs nation was rather apprehensive after the hockey lesson their "Glorieux" were thought by the Tampa Bay Lightning in a 4-0 rout on Thursday night, tonight's performance has once again righted things in Habs land. In front of a full house at Le Colisée (that's right not one free seat in the house even though this was only an exhibition game) the Canadiens pulled a very exciting display out of their hat. If you read my take on the morning skate, I have to report that I was wrong in my assessment. The team might have looked asleep during the morning's practice but it was certainly awake tonight

and it came to play. I cannot say what happened between the morning skate and game time but something must have done.

Right from the get go, the Canadiens pressed on, they came out hungry and it showed. While the Lightning must have been eager to please, they were quite simply outclassed. The visitors put their local heroes in the starting line-up, Lecavalier, St. Louis, Bergeron and Garon were all on the ice for the opening face-off but it wasn't enough to make them feel at home. The Habs played a fast, strong game and won the crowd over in minutes. Yes, they did have to win the crowd over, don't forget; this is Nordiques territory and the Habs once were mortal enemies to the Quebec City masses.

Halfway through the first period, while the Canadiens were shorthanded Brian Gionta provided a remarkable second effort to break free of the Tampa Bay defense and score the first goal of the game in spectacular fashion. The Colisée literally exploded with cheers and the sound was deafening. The rest of the first period was rather tame aside from the fact that Ryan Malone seemed to be looking for trouble, one thing is for sure, he and P.K. Subban should not under any circumstance be invited to attend the same party,

The start of the second period was quite hectic, 3 goals were scored in a little over 3 minutes. The first of which was put away by Scott Gomez who is working hard at finding redemption after a dismal season last year. It was his 3rd goal of the preseason and his face absolutely lit up when he hit the back of the net. Seems he is on his way to finding the said redemption, he was voted the first star of the night. After Gomez hit the target, Lecavalier showcased his tremendous skills by backhanding a loose puck in the top of the Canadiens net. This was to be the only time Price would be beaten on the night...after all, the Lightning only managed to shoot 19 times which is a far cry from a busy night for the Canadian's net minder. In fact, the number 1 even had time to join in the wave started by the crowd, a rather funny sight I will admit.

After Lecavalier made it 2-1 Montreal, Jaroslav Spacek directed a shot towards the Bolts' net which



was expertly deflected by Mathieu Darche to make it 3-1. It was a rather pleasant sigh for Habs fans to see Spacek do something right...to say that he has had a hard preseason would be an understatement. The last tally of the second period was notched by the Habs' big free agent signing of the summer; Erik Cole. While he looked awkward and out of place for most of the evening, he did still manage to put the Habs ahead 4-1. Jacques Martin will expect more from him during the season though and will not want to see him flat on the ice as often as he did tonight, he was hit on numerous occasions and didn't seem to be able to take the punishment. Interestingly, he spent the night on the third line with Desharnais and Darche. When he was signed, he was definitely pencilled-in as a top 6 forward...

The last period saw Plekanec pull out a wonderful individual effort to empty the Tampa Bay crease and send the puck to the front of the net for Cammalleri to tap it in. That most likely was the easiest goal he ever scored. Aside from that play, the sold out Colisée also saw Ryan Malone (more than likely) book himself a date with Brendan Shanahan for a dangerous hit to the head of the Habs' new D-man Chris Campoli. One has to wonder what Malone was thinking, not only do these kinds of hit have no place in the game but Shanny has made himself pretty clear about the way those will be handle from now on since he took office. Time will tell what kind of punishment Malone will face but as it happened, Gorges saw red and pounced on the offender to avenge his teammate. The crowd got on its feet and a loud "Gorges" chant filled up the place. Gorge got a pretty bad cut for his troubles but safe to say the wounded hero didn't mind about that, he did the right thing and stood up for the new guy.

So another year, another preseason in the history books...the Habs close out that one with a 2-6 record but after seeing last night's display, the mood amongst fans was definitely on the up and once more, all hope is allowed for the Habs faithful. As Quebec City wakes up this morning though, everyone is ready to commemorate the first anniversary of "La Marche Bleue". Activities are planned throughout the day including a hockey cosom game downtown featuring players from the Nordiques' past and if people need another motivation to mark the day, over a 100 shops around the town and its neighbouring areas are offering discount to anyone dressed in blue. I for one expect to see Nordiques colors all over the place today as the good people from Quebec are hoping to get some media coverage on this and send yet another message that they are ready and willing to the NHL front office. Let's hope "La journée bleue" is as successful as "La marche bleue" was....

While the Canadiens' fans hope their team lights up the ice this season, the Nordiques fans just plain hope...but as "Captain Nordiques" (a man dressed up in a Captain America modified costume at last night's game) best said it last night through a colorful Nordiques sign: Don't stop believing...

